Wagner - Parsifal

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A KEY

TO

PARSIFAL

(With Thematic Musical Illustrations)

TRANSLATED BY

WILLIAM ASHTON ELLIS

FROM THE GERMAN OF

HANS VON WOLZOGEN

(By Permission of the Author and of the German Publisher, Herr Louis Oertel, Hanover).

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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION.

FEW words are necessary to introduce to the English-speaking public a translation of one of those invaluable little treatises by Hans von Wolzogen which have now become the standard *vade mecum* for all those who go to hear one of Richard Wagner's music-dramas in any other spirit than that of sheer curiosity. The only wonder is that seven years have passed since *Parsifal* was first produced, and yet no one has ere this attempted to turn into English a work which has become inseparable, in the German mind, from the great drama which it so well elucidates. For my own part, however, I should not have attempted the task had it not been that during a stay at Bayreuth, in 1888, for the whole series of that year's performances, I found the intervals between each representation most favourable to the taking up of work which, dealing with the very object of my visit, was made congenial by the quiet repose of the peaceful little town.

Urged by a few personal friends who wish to study Wolzogen's analysis in their own tongue, I now offer the product of my labour to the lovers of the Meister's music, while, at the same time, I desire to express my thanks to Madame Wagner, the most indefatigable of all workers in her late husband's cause, for her kind permission to reprint the musical extracts, and to the author of the original treatise for his willing sanction to my project.

As to the "Englishing," I have not endeavoured to do more than give a faithful translation of Wolzogen's words, and would remind my readers that this pamphlet is intended for *use*, and not as a costly fabric on which to embroider flowers of speech. Where quotations from the poem occur in the original, I have given the German

words as well as the corresponding passages from Mr. Corder's translation of the drama—the only one as yet published, for I have not yet been able to prevail upon my friend, Mr. Alfred Forman, to give to the world his own highly poetical rendering. As my object has been to enable students of the music to follow closely the allusions in the text, this was the only fitting means; though, of course, it must be understood that occasionally it happens that the words quoted from Mr. Corder are not (owing to the dislocation of phrases forced on him, for sake of rhythm) the equivalent of Richard Wagner's lines, but merely those which occur at that portion of the English text-book corresponding to the sentence quoted by Wolzogen.

To guide the eye with greater ease to the frequently recurring leading *motivs*, I have had them printed in block type (thus, **Kundry-motiv**), as I find it of great assistance in studying the work to seize at a glance its salient features in their due order. This *motiv*-hunting, however, I would strongly deprecate in any who visit Bayreuth for the first time, as it is too apt to destroy the effect of the appeal of the music to the heart, by substituting head-knowledge for heart-enjoyment. But, after one or two visits, the head also claims its share in the appreciation, and only by appeasing its demands can the heart regain its sway; while the knowledge of the *reason* of the employment of this or that *motiv* passes over at last into that half-conscious realm where analysis exists only in its stored result, and understanding merges into intuition. The ear is then no longer troubled by the keen attempt to recognise every motiv as it wells forth from the music, but each phrase seems to whisper in half-hushed voice its meaning, in unison with the æsthetic pleasure of the sound.

WM. ASHTON ELLIS.

Westminster, June, 1889.

HANS VON WOLZOGEN.

THE MATERIAL OF THE MUSIC-DRAMA, "PARSIFAL."

CRITICS of Richard Wagner's dramas have generally fallen into the error of measuring them by the standard of Old-German poems, founded on the early-Germanic or mediæval myths and *Sagas* with which they deal. For "Tristan" they have adduced the Epic of Gottfried von Strassburg; for the "Ring des Nibelungen," the *Nibelungenlied*. Those, again, who perceived that Wagner's Nibelungen-poem had very little in common with the *Nibelungenlied* referred it to the *Eddas*, and treated the new drama as a mere dramatisation of the old Skaldic poetry; and thus the poet was reproached with having left the German soil to seek the material of his work in a foreign island.

All this is incorrect and puerile. The "stuffs" (*stoffe*), to denote them thus briefly once for all, from which Wagner has drawn, are much older than the confused and fragmentary remains of the Skaldic rendering of the ancient beliefs and traditional Sagas of the Northern peoples that have descended to us; to say nothing of their epical remodelling by the chivalric and burgher schools of singers of the 13th century in Germany. Their characteristic traits passed over to us as early as the great Aryan emigrations from Asia; and, since then, in ever new development and welding of one with the other, they have become the well-earned possession of the Germanic, and especially of the *German*, people. For, whereas the *Eddas*, in their treatment of the *Siegfried-sagas* are demonstrably based on importations from Germany; on the other hand, the Celtic-French renderings of Sagas such as those of *Tristan* and of *Parsifal* attained only in their German form the complete ethical unfolding of the universal human truths lying hid in them, and thus became our national property. But originally the whole "stuff" of the Sagas inherited by the races of Western Europe was essentially a *Germanic-Aryan* pos-

session; and every German poet who approached it as an archetype of poetic imagination belonging to the spirit of our nation, sought only to restore anew to us its intimate possession. When success crowned his efforts, it was not only by a new moulding of the form of the old material, but also by a new expansion and interpretation of its spiritual and ethical contents. Yet both depended on the special tendencies of the *new* poet, on the special fashion of his branch and form of art; and these again were governed by the *epoch* in which he composed. The mediæval singer created only mediæval epic poems; and no later generation could have permitted itself to entertain the idea of merely modifying these finished works of art, and presenting the result as the expression of the spirit of a later epoch. Therefore it were folly to imagine that, by merely taking the material appropriated in these epic poems and running it into a dramatic mould, one had done sufficient to satisfy the needs of modern times, and had created a Tristan or a Nibelungen-drama fit to set before the public of to-day. This public would be justified in showing no sympathy with such a literary patchwork.

Not in the outer change of the form, nor in the simple process of expressing the contents in the best modern poetical language, was a new enhancement of the old material to be gained. In fact it must be *new-conquered* day by day; and such a victory is it that Wagner won when he submitted the old material to a poetical new-birth, and thus fitted it for the form of the new music-drama and for the sympathies of a generation inspired with the spirit of this branch of art. The universal-human foundations of this oft-remodelled world of Sagas, were by him, as by every true poet, to be first cleared of all arbitrary superstructures. Afterwards he was to form and build up in a manner fitting, first to the national bent of mind, to the manner of thought and to the conception of the universe, which had meanwhile developed on their own lines,—secondly to the very form of art which, born of this national spirit, was adapted to clothe it with a true and characteristic expression.

In this sense did the ancient singer of the *Nibelungenlied* form his poem from the old material of the Sagas, according to the needs of the *Epos* of those times, in a new and distinct shape, and with the peculiar force of the

German christianity of those days, using so much of the old material as his instinct as singer dictated to him. But, the more the spirit of the nation evolved from its earlier historical wrappings, so much the nearer could it approach to the universal-human kernel of the "stuff," and thus to the possibility of a true and characteristic art. That which lives in this spirit of the nation to-day, first as a truly German nature, then as a feeling of sympathetic union with the nature of mankind at large, and finally as a bent towards artistic ideality—that concentrated itself in the unique artistic personality of a tragic poet, the breath of whose creative inspiration was Music;—and this personality moulded once more the thus developed contents of the national spirit in the correspondingly new-modelled form of the ancient national "stuff."

For the reason that *Music* as the new and highly-developed method of artistic expression of true German feeling, was given to Wagner as his own mother-tongue, was he able to vitalise this "stuff" for our modern times, with that impressive effect which we experience in every good representation of his works. The high ideality of the "stuff" permitted him to take for the basis of his artistic fancy not only that world of heathen Gods, which was its original domain,—the heroic types of the poetic inspiration of the old Germanic races—but also the kingdom of the highest ideal of the Christian religion, symbolised in the story of the *Gral*. But the realisation of this ideality must have remained beyond our reach,—as it remained, in part, beyond the reach of the word-painting of the Nibelungen-singers of the Hohenstaufen period,—had we not possessed the art of *Music*, in its development from Bach to Beethoven. This German Music transmutes, in its embrace, even the most far-removed Ideal into a new lofty and intimate Reality. In the *Music-Drama* the ancient Gods come once more to life, as giant types of those passions and thoughts which are the root-ideas of the whole poetic "stuff" itself; and the heavenly elevation of the Christian Divine ideal, as it is enunciated in the *Gral-Sagas*—and, since the time of Wolfram von Eschenbach, is inseparable from the "stuff" of *Parsifal*,—gains in it also life.

Not that it was Wolfram who first breathed the spirit of religion into the Sagas; for the union of the heroic *Parsifal-Saga* with the religious *Gral-Saga* was already

effected before his time, and had been done justice to, at considerable length, in the poem of the Frenchman, Chretiens de Troyes. But, with Wolfram the spirit of the *Gral-Sagas* has so saturated his whole poem with a sacred depth of meaning, that in it first the whole significance of the union of the two traditions comes to light. Wolfram's rendering can, however, by no means be taken as sufficient for all time, for it also bears throughout the impress of his own epoch; his knighthood of the Gral is a church militant in all the splendour of mediæval chivalry, his spirit of Christianity is the spirit of the church of his day, although in the conception of this gifted poet it attains an individual poetic force of its own.

Since Wolfram's time a poet treating anew the old material could never more divorce the stories of *Parsifal* and of the *Gral*; he also must portray the Gral as the purest essence of religious feeling—but especially of the deepest religious feeling which can come to full development of power in the enlightened spirit of Christianity of *our* epoch. Whatever, in the sense of this religious Ideal, could serve, for the purpose of the new Music-Drama, Wagner took from Wolfram's poem, and from other remains and versions of the old "stuff," and built into the structure of the religious tragedy which he has called a *Bühnenweihfestspiel* (Sacred-festival-play), and which he has moulded with a free hand in consonance with the spirit of this Ideal.

To these separate features of the *Sagas* we propose to devote a moment's attention, as they lie at the root of the *Musical* treatment of the work which is the subject of this essay.

THE GRAL.

The *Gral* corresponds to the sacred vessel, wherein, according to the oldest traditions of the Aryan peoples, was contained the divine draught which was the ecstasy-working inheritance of ancient culture, the spiritualised product of Nature. In the *Soma*, *Haoma*, Wine, or Mead, the worshippers believed that they tasted of the divine essence itself, and partook in it of the very substance of the God. Inward elevation, purification, and renewal of strength in the service of their God united the participators in a mysterious bond of holy Brotherhood; and this we find most markedly in the Eleusynian mysteries,

where Demeter and Dionysos were partaken of in the Bread (Sesam) and the Wine (Kykeon). This is the archetype of the Christian Sacrament. The Gaels also of the British isles revered it as the hōly caldron of Ceridwen, their Ceres,=Demeter; in a far more recent, post-Christian tradition it recurs as a charger upon which there lay a bleeding head. The blood of the God (as of Dionysos Zagreus, of the Greeks) took on, in this Northern country, the materialised type for which the legend of John the Baptist may have served as an example. This tradition, related in the so-called *Mabinogi* MS., of the 14th century,* is, however, that of *Peredur*, which corresponds closely with the story of the French *Perceval*. Whether its origin is Gaelic or French, at all events it is in France that first comes to light the appellation the *Gral*, with the story of this sacred vessel being the cup of the Last Supper of Christ; for Robert de Boron in his "Petit St.-Graal" (12th century) tells its history, as derived from still older sources. This cup of the Last Supper, together with the Patena, was given by the Saviour to Joseph of Arimathea,—who had gathered in it the blood of the crucified one,—as a sacred inheritance and that it might sustain his life in prison, until Titus set him free and accepted baptism at his hands. (We see here in *Titus* the first trace of the keeper of the Gral, *Titurel* of the later traditions). This holy Gral's vessel Chretiens de Troyes (deceased in 1190), in his "Perceval le Galois," or "Contes de Graal," places in the possession of the kindred of *Perceval* as a healing, nourishing and purifying relic, inherited from Joseph. In the poem of Wolfram written about 1210, on the model of Chretiens de Troyes, in place of the cup we are suddenly confronted with a *stone*, brought to earth by an angelic host and confided to the guardianship of the "Templars," the pious knights of Titurel, on the "Mountain of Salvation,"—inaccessible to sinners,—Monsalvätch. Reinforced in its wondrous powers on each Good Friday by the oblation of the heavenly dove, this Gral of Wolfram's poem becomes a revelation of the divine essence itself and is brought into intimate relation with the Last Supper and death of

* Mr. Alfred Nutt, in his "Studies of the Legend of the Holy Grail," calls the *Mabinogi* "a Welsh prose romance found in the Red Book of Hergest, a MS. of the end of the 14th century, and in MSS. a hundred years older." Whether this romance preceded or followed that of Chretiens de Troyes is still a disputed point. —TRANSLATOR.

Christ. Wolfram ascribes the tradition of this stone, which points to Eastern star-worship, to a poet named Kiot, on the authority of an Arabian-Spaniard, Flegetanis, (*Arab*=Astronomer) of semi-Jewish descent. In Spain, where once the Gothic Christians under the leadership of Pelayo, took refuge in the mountains of the North, fleeing from the heathen Moors, and carrying with them their holy relic, history certainly offered a most significant model for

THE KNIGHTHOOD OF THE GRAL.

This knighthood represents the ancient mystery-community, the consecrated brotherhood, in the ideal form of a mediæval spiritual order of chivalry. The knights are called by Wolfram "*Templeisen*" and seem to correspond to the Templars, with whom also the head resting on the charger, as in the Gaelic Saga, was treated as an object of worship. It was especially in northern Spain that they were represented in considerable numbers, as the followers of the Gothic opponents of the pagan. The *Templeisen* of Wolfram were fed and strengthened by the Gral; they hearkened to the distant cry for deliverance from suffering, and sped into the world as champions of innocence and punishers of wrong. The names of those thus called appeared upon the Gral. They were the knightly incorporation of the love of God in the earthly world of heroes. As the tragic symbol of their knighthood, there appears, in all their traditions, besides the holy Gral, the

BLOODY LANCE.

The *Mabinogi* MS. does not recognise in this a Christian relic; but Chretiens of Troyes, on the other hand, describes it as the spear of Longinus, which pierced the side of the crucified Saviour. In Wolfram's poem this meaning disappears: the bleeding spear, which the Gral's community greets with loud laments as it is borne around the hall, is a poisoned weapon which, wielded by an unknown heathen who strove with the knights for the possession of the Gral, dealt to king Amfortas, the successor of Titurel in the guardianship of the Gral, an incurable wound, while the king was in pursuit of a love-adventure. This Amfortas is

THE SICK KING,

whose personage is common to all these traditions. In the *Mabinogi* MS. he appears as a lame old man, the uncle of Peredur, but his sickness bears little relation to the story; the lance and the bleeding head are there referred to the murdered father of Peredur, and the object of the hero is vengeance for his father's death. In Chretien's narrative the sick king (*le roi pêcheur*—fisher, and sinner) is the king of the Gral; Wolfram gives him the name *Amfortas*, *i.e.*, the powerless, the sufferer, and beside him the "Greis" (Grey-beard), his ancestor Titurel, is seen reposing on a couch in the castle of the Gral. The figure of Amfortas represents the suffering that has forced its way even into the community of the Gral, as a consequence of sin. The sin is the yielding to the senses, the breaking of the most stringent rules of the holy order; the punishment comes from the spirit of heathendom, which embodies in itself the sinfulness of the senses. Healing must take place, in both versions, through the intervention of a promised knight, who shall come and "question." This knight is the hero of the Parsifal-Saga in its union with the Gral-Saga:

PEREDUR—PERCEVAL—PARZIVAL—PARSIFAL.

He is thus far a counterpart of Lohengrin, that in Lohengrin we see the consecrated knight of the Gral speeding forth on a mission of deliverance, whereas Parsifal is he who is only seeking for the Gral and questioning—or wandering because he does not question. The Gral, concealed from every sinner and heathen, is the highest aim of the ideal yearning of the pious devotion of the chivalrous spirit; it is the religious *Ideal*, sought for in the battles of life, revealed in the death of Christ, and held aloft to faith in the participation of His sacrament.—The Gaelic name, *Peredur* is derived from *Per-gedur*, which signifies the seeker of the bowl. The hero, however, could only become the seeker of the Gral, in the French legends. It is therefore less permissible to explain Parzival's name by the Gaelic *Per-kyfaill* than by the derivation, adopted by Görres, from the

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Arabic *Parseh-Fal, i.e.*, "the pure fool." It is principally in such a character that the seeking hero appears in all the legends. His innocence and simplicity were the ground of his calling to the highest act of healing. The story of the hero's childhood as told in the Mabinogi agrees in every point with the later poems of Chretiens and Wolfram. Fatherless, and reared by his mother in seclusion from the world, the guileless child of the woods is attracted into the world by the brilliance of a cavalcade of knights; according to Chretiens he rushes forth in the garb of a peasant, and according to Wolfram in that of a fool; the latter calls him the "*Tumbe klåre*," also the "guileless fool," and derives his pedigree from the family of Anjou, as the son of Gamuret and Herzeloyde. In *Mabinogi*, after countless madcap adventures, he comes to the castle of his lame uncle, where, however, he *does not ask* the meaning of the lance and the bloody head. In the versions of Chretiens and Wolfram this castle is that of the Gral, where his advent is foretold by the Gral, as of the youth who shall heal the ailing king by his question. But the fool does *not* question. Once more he speeds into the world, on chivalric adventures bent. There he is smitten with the curse, for reason of his omission: in *Mabinogi*, by a wild, black-haired maiden, who is called by Chretiens "la demoiselle," by Wolfram "Kondrie la sorcière," the witch, and at the same time the messenger of the Gral. He must now wander and seek, until he finds once more the "wonder-castle." He meets, in all these accounts, the spiritual, or ascetic, knight—who upbraids him for carrying armour on Good Friday. According to Chretiens and Wolfram, there follows the teaching of the nature of the Gral by the hermit-knight. In Mabinogi also a hermit is the host of Peredur; in the narratives of Chretiens and Wolfram this personality is divided between an earlier teacher of knightly virtues (*Gurnemans*) and this later interpreter of the mysteries of the Gral (Wolfram's *Trevrezent*). At last the seeker finds the castle; in *Mabinogi* he avenges his father; according to Chretiens he makes whole again the fragments of a broken sword, and heals the king by his question as to the lance and Gral; and, according to Wolfram, by the question "What ails thee, uncle?" He becomes king in his stead.

PARSIFAL, ACCORDING TO WAGNER,

unites in one personality all these chief characteristics of the older legends. He is the guileless fool, the son of Gamuret and Herzeleide, born after his father's death, and attracted from the woods into the world by the appearance of a cavalcade of knights. Ignorant, he enters the kingdom of the Gral by a foolish act of animal-murder (the swan). The sufferings of the king Amfortas are caused by his conflict with the representative of paganism, Klingsor (the famous sorcerer of the German legends), and it is also in the pursuit of a love-adventure that he has received his hurt. The lance is the holy spear of Longinus; the king has carried this holy relic into the conflict; Kundry, under the spell of Klingsor, has lured him to her embraces; the spear is stolen from him by Klingsor, and he himself is wounded by it: only the touch of the spear (which also, according to Wolfram, "cools" the wound) can heal the king. But only the "*reine thor*" (guileless fool), promised in the writing on the Gral, can win back the spear from Klingsor, by reason of preserving his purity through all the perils of temptation of the senses; this can only take place through his intuitive consciousness of the sin of Amfortas; and this consciousness is only to be attained by the deepest compassion with the sufferer. To this intent the prophecy on the Gral is phrased—

> "*Durch Mitleid wissend,*
> *der reine Thor:*
> *harre sein,*
> *den ich erkor!*"

> "Wise through compassion,
> the guileless Fool:
> watch for him
> whom I shall choose!"

Thus the *epic* episode of the "question" becomes a *dramatic* motive. The question, of Wolfram's story, is in itself superfluous, for Parzival has already learnt that whereof he enquires; it signifies, however, in the epic method of representation, the feeling of compassion for the king, and thus symbolises a deed of compassion incumbent on the hero. This deed of compassion becomes a dramatic action with Wagner, in the recovery of the spear; and instead of the merely symbolic formula of the *question* of the epic poem, ineffectual for the purposes of

drama, we have the actual touching of the wound by the re-conquered spear, typifying the healing deed of compassion turned to knowledge. Gurnemanz, the instructor of the holy knighthood in warlike exercises, in whose character the divided personages of the epos, the hermit and the knight, are once more united in the drama, believes that in the fool, who has so strangely entered the precincts of the Gral, he has found the promised one, and conducts him to the "Love-feast" in the castle; but, though deeply seized with grief whose cause he knows not,—Parsifal does not yet understand the sufferings of Amfortas. He is thrust out once more into the world of fools and knaves, and falls into the domain of temptation and deceit, the magic garden of Klingsor. But, in the very arms of Kundry, he withstands temptation, for, placed in a like situation with that of Amfortas, the recollection of the latter's woe awakens him to full consciousness of its sinful meaning. Made *wise* by true *compassion*, he wins back the spear from the heathen power of the sorcery of the senses, which he thus brings to nought. Yet the curse of Kundry condemns him to long years of wandering: the guileless one must preserve the recovered relic, the knowledge of sin and of suffering, in all the trials and persecutions of the world, and maintain it by his own unaided strength and deeds through every wearying conflict; this accomplished, at last he finds the path that leads him on his homeward journey to the Gral. On Good Friday he treads once more the sacred ground, but on this day of redemption he must put off all armour of worldly knighthood; with the divinely consecrated and purified weapon he closes the wound of sin in the pain-freed house of healing. He becomes king in Amfortas' stead.

THE GRAL, ACCORDING TO WAGNER,

appears, in like manner with the spear, in its full Christian and religious significance. Both symbols are, like the "stone" of Wolfram's poem, brought down from heaven by an angel-host to Titurel, who builds for them in the mountains of Northern Spain, the ancient asylum of pure belief, the shrine which "no sinner findeth." This is in consonance also with the account of Wolfram's successor, Albrecht von Scharffenberg, in his poem of the "*younger Titurel*" (1270); but, whereas by him every

incident is dealt with from the *outer* side for the epic purpose of portraying the pomp of chivalry, by Wagner everything is treated from the *inner* side, with a depth of religious intent, as though imbued with the spirit of the most Christian of all Christian sacraments, the Last Supper, the divine sacrifice. This is betokened by the actual representation of the participation of the pure and holy community in the sacred feast of the divine substance, the permeation of their own blood and body by the body and blood of God, for the exercise of the spirit of heavenly love in earthly deeds of compassion with innocence and right. But in Amfortas' sin-wound suffers the Saviour Himself, the spirit of divine love entrusted to the care of man in a world of sin. Yet the same divine might of conscious sympathy frees it from the sufferings wrought by the crimes of mankind, and brings "Redemption to the Redeemer."—In thus deepening the meaning of the old Sagas, and while, on the one hand, restoring the ancient significance of the mystery of the holy vessel, and, on the other, rendering possible an ideal conception of the pure Christian ideal of redemption, the dramatist must perforce take, as the power opposed to the Christianity embodied in the Gral and its surroundings, the incorporation of paganism itself, in the manner in which it was hinted at, but never thoroughly carried out, in the older legendary forms, and especially in the great epic poems of the chivalric epoch. The epics of chivalry had rather portrayed as the obverse of the life of the spiritual knighthood of the Gral, the worldly knighthood of the famous Round Table of King Arthur. In all the legendary poems to which we have referred, from *Mabinogi* onwards, Parsifal appears at the court of Arthur. Wolfram had already taken the antagonism in a deeper sense; for it is at the court of Arthur, in all the pomp of worldly chivalry, that the hero is smitten by the curse of the messengeress of the Gral; at the court of Arthur it is that she, on his penitent return, proclaims to him the release from the curse. This court of Arthur, a scene peculiar to the fancy of the middle ages, could find no fitting place in a religious drama of our day; its whole character is that of the chivalric epos, consumed, even with Wolfram, by the devouring spirit of adventure of the knights of Arthur, although its intrusion into the inner alliance of the legends of Parsifal and of the Gral,

and thenceforth intimate blending with those legends, were only a device of the epic art, greedy for material, however foreign to its main story. The true counterfoil to the castle of the Gral is found in the *châtel merveil*, the magic castle of the heathen Klingsor, which forms only an episode in Wolfram's poem. The master of the magic mirror, of the magic forest, and of the 400 imprisoned maidens (of Wolfram's story) becomes

WAGNER'S KLINGSOR,

and is identified with that heathen in whose person Paganism takes part in the action of the old Sagas, the nameless enemy of the Gral, according to Wolfram, whose spear it was that wounded the king Amfortas; whereas in Wolfram's poem, besides Parzival, *Gawan* plays an important part as the representative of worldly chivalry, and is brought into intimate relation with Klingsor and his enslaved enchantress *Orgeluse*, and all kinds of references are made to magic flowers and garlands and floral names, which we find again in the account of the love-adventure of the Gral's king himself. Wagner has knit this all into one whole and transferred it to his own hero Parsifal (who is also described by Wolfram as a forerunner of Gawan, in renouncing the love of Orgeluse), and has thereby given dramatic unity of form to the temptation, by the powers of heathen sensuality, of the fool thrust forth into the world; but he has preserved the individual features found in all the legends. *Orgeluse* the temptress, he also identifies with *Kundry* the cursing messengeress of the Gral, as the mistress of the flower-sprites of Klingsor.

WAGNER'S KUNDRY.

This is the most interesting character which the poet had to create for his drama. In her are united almost all the manifold impersonations of the *female principle* derived, according to their inner meaning, from the epic versions of the legends. All the female characters of these separate poems may be referred to one original mythical conception, the archetype of the Germanic *Walküre*, represented under the diverse forms of countless goddesses and semi-goddesses. Kundry appears in all these legends with the characteristics of the *Walküre*, and therefore at times as an inimical, at times as a help-

ing and healing, power. Thus she represents the two sides of woman's nature, which the Germanic people had portrayed in their myths as the warring and slaying *Walküre*, and their protecting and beneficent counterparts. In all the legends she curses the hero, and then removes from him the curse, or explains to him his fault, and yields him her assistance; thus, in Mabinogi, for instance, she is changed into a beautiful maiden. This double individuality, of mythical origin, Wagner has employed for a dramatic purpose, and has, at the same time, identified Kundry with the *Herodias* of German legends. Herodias also is a being of like nature with the Walküre, a *Frau Hera* or *Herke*, a tempestuous spirit storming through the world in eternal unrest; and in this lies her kinship with Kundry, the wild horsewoman of the Gral, whose name (*Gundryggja* in the northern myths) we find also in the Eddas, as denoting her office of Walküre, that of "urging to conflict." Herodias is said to have *laughed* when she bore aloft the head of John the Baptist on the charger; the bleeding head cursed her by its glance to everlasting wandering. Thus she became a female Ahasuerus, a companion of the wild horseman, *Hackelberg*, *i.e.*, the "mantle-bearer," *Wodan*, as the god of storm and death. This demonic bond of co-fraternity Wagner has depicted as existing between Kundry and *Klingsor*, whose Gaelic counterpart bears the name of *Gwyddao*, *i.e.*, Gwodan, Wodan. As the bloody head of the Gaelic Sagas becomes, in the Gral-legends, the symbol of the suffering Saviour Himself, the *Gral*, so, according to Wagner's interpretation, Kundry is represented as having laughed, not at the head of John but at Christ Himself when bearing the burden of the cross: then was she smitten by His glance, and now, condemned to "cursèd laughter," she wanders in despair throughout the world, seeking for the Redeemer who shall by love release her from her curse. Thus does she seek expiation in deeds of good, as in the service of the Gral; but the curse of her crime urges her ever anew to evil. The representative of Heathendom, the sworn foe of Christ and His saints, Klingsor, preserved alone by his self-mutilation from her temptations, has acquired power over her by means of a magic trance, and forces her to his service, changing her form to one of wondrous beauty in order to destroy the knights of the Gral by means of the

evil and treacherous side of woman's nature, the heathen power of the senses. Thus has she betrayed Amfortas; but Parsifal, the guileless one, withstands her. By reason of her despairing desire for redemption by love, the unhappy creature seeks, in the very seduction which her demoniacal beauty must exercise, to attain the divine salvation of love for which her curse-struck nature strives. The chosen one, Parsifal, made wise by the true love born of compassion, recognises the mad perversity of this yearning, and tears himself from her embraces. Cast from him she condemns him to *Irre* (wandering astray); but Klingsor's power is broken by the victory of purity, and the spear is now in Parsifal's hands. In penitence and humility, freed from her diabolical master, Kundry seeks the service of the Gral: and when Parsifal also returns to the sacred realm, the eternally laughing woman *weeps*, under the blessing of her baptism by the loving hands of the Gral's new king. Thus the accursed woman comes also under the influence of the redeeming power of the true spirit of Christianity. Redeemed she dies in the radiance of God's grace; whilst the redeemed brotherhood of knights, strengthened anew by the light of the once more uncovered Gral, carry into still wider circles the deeds of healing and compassion of true Christianity, in the service of the holy symbol of divine love, freed from the sufferings of sin.

THE PURPOSE OF MY "LEITFADEN."

With regard to these "Leitfaden" and their subject, the *motivs*, I have explained my purpose, not only in a lengthy introduction to my classification of the motivs of the "*Götterdämmerung*" (Mus. Wochenblatt, 1877, Nos. 8 and 9) and in the preface to the fourth and amended edition of my "Nibelungen-Leitfaden," but, with all possible brevity, in my "Leitfaden to Tristan" (Leipzig, Senf) in the chapter entitled "the music." I may therefore refrain from repeating what I have said so often, and merely remark that these so-called "motivs" are definite musical themes which are the essential ground-forms of both the symphonic and the dramatic sentences. In the one relation it is according to the external rules of symmetrical and appropriate Style, such as of contrast, of change and of repetition, in the other according to the inner laws of the drama, that they are set forth, worked out, woven together, and developed in the richest variety. Whilst their creation is the marvellous work of genius, their wider musical elaboration is the special province of the artist. Yet, in the artistic work of development, in this musical-dramatic style, the unceasing force of creative genius must needs maintain its living power; for it is not merely a question of building up an edifice of tone, full of artistic beauty, but,—in harmony with the spirit of the poem,—of

breathing the breath of living music into the whole drama, in faithful following of its every nuance, its movement, its inner feeling, its emotions and its action. In the dramatic phrases, the working out of these themes is also the essential, and ever-present, living picture of the drama, regarded from its musical side, *i.e.*, according to the inner and spiritual mainsprings of its poetic motives and action.

To discover in what way the artist employs and develops his themes, according to their melody, harmony, and rhythm, how, in novel style, he works them out and elaborates them to longer symphonic pieces, or to shorter ornamental figures,—this is a task highly interesting to the *musician*, even apart from any reference to the drama itself. But I have not written my essays for professional musicians, whom I must leave to deal, according to their own fixed canons, with the dramatic phrases of Wagner, from their own special standpoint, and for those who interest themselves in such studies. I can tell them nothing which they would not know better than myself, and it would not assist the "laity" were I to deal with such matters; for the latter class is in a like position with myself,—it is not musical by profession. It is for it, however, that I write these "Leitfaden," to give it a few hints of the idea of the style of organisation of Wagner's art-work in its totality, of the unity of the musical and poetic essence of his works in its twofold form, namely in such poetic and musical "motivs." I have been told that many people have thanked a prior acquaintance with my essays for a more thorough enjoyment of these works of art when represented; but I cannot advance the smallest claim to either calling forth or rendering possible this enjoyment itself. Music works directly on the feelings; no act of reflection can in any way replace this receptive element. Yet the path to feeling is less often unencumbered than people assume. Thus it may well happen that a too great want of acquaintance with the poem to which the music gives expression, a prejudice adopted from the opinions of others, or a narrowing of the musical sense to the definite forms of old-established custom, should hinder and restrain the influence of the music. Against such preconceived ideas my expositions may be of some help to earnest readers; on the other hand, I believe that they may be of some service to the reflective consciousness as a supplementary explanation of individual characteristics of the object of artistic contemplation.

One word more! I must abide by my plan of giving distinctive names to the separate themes which I desire to single out and stamp upon the memory. The task is a hard one and never completely satisfactory; for the musical *soul* of the motiv can never be expressed in concrete terms. Thus my names can only be of value as tokens to assist in the recognition of the themes; others may easily choose other names, and often, perchance, they might find better ones. But one cannot speak of the *motivs* without first christening them by names, for these *motivs* are not confined to a simple pair, as in a symphony, and one cannot therefore designate them by numerals. This has been clearly proved to me in an amusing occurrence of recent date: the Berlin "*Musik-Welt*" had, even before the engraving of the pianoforte-score, thought it necessary to publish a certain number of fugitive commentaries thereon, and the author of these notes, so as not to incur the charge of *Leitfaden*-seeking, indited a strong protest against works that employed my method of explanation, closing his article with the following remarkable passage:—

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

"If, however, I here make use of the expression *motivs* it is not with the view of taking my part in such a breach of custom (*unsitte*), but because I wish more comprehensibly to denote certain salient points whose meaning is obvious."

As a matter of fact we thus find him speaking of: the Bell-motiv, the Swan-motiv, the Klingsor-motiv, the Zauber-motiv (sorcery), the spiritual-motiv, the triplet-motiv, of the Blumenmädchen (enchanted flower-maidens), Parsifal's heroic motiv, the grief-motiv of Amfortas, and the Kundry-motiv, or the "motiv of the wandering Jewess."

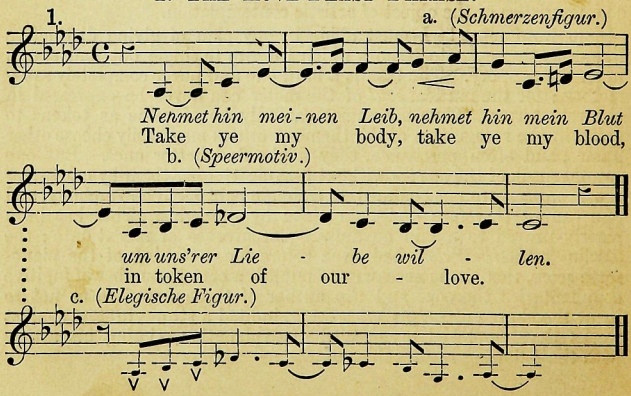
Thus, even at the peril of being accused of plagiarising from certain of these denominations, I cheerfully hold fast to my "breach of custom," and write in the same "unmannerly" style these—my last—thematic *Leitfaden*, to the music of "Parsifal."

———o———

THE PRELUDE

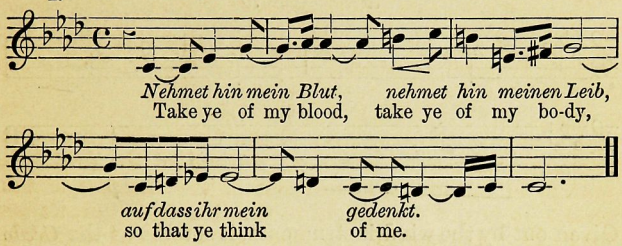
Leads us into the sanctuary of the Gral. We hear the sacred, earnest tones which, at the end of the first act, portray in music the Love-Feast of the Knights of the Gral. It is not that might of the Gral which proclaims itself in "Lohengrin" in the splendour of chivalry, bringing help to the world from out of the sacred and mysterious distance; it is the Divine power of Love and Faith, which proclaims its heavenly message to the hearts of men, and creates for itself, from believing souls, a devout community of fervent servants of God. The message of eternal love, which takes pity on men, and has given its own blood in offering for their salvation, sounds in the solemn silence, in the soft and inward (*innig*) intonation of the melody of the "**Last Supper Phrase**"—(*Der Liebesmahl-Spruch*—I. 1):

I. THE LOVE-FEAST PHRASE.



With the softly-whispering *Tremolo* harmonies of the string instruments, this divine spirit of Love seems to pass into the enraptured hearts of the worshippers, who, as though their inmost souls were drawn up to the heavenly source of the proclamation, repeat the sacred sentence in the hush of prayer.—In the same way follows the second portion of the phrase (I. 2.):

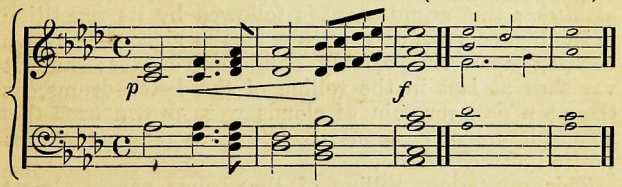
2.



The community of believers is drawn into one bond of union, and, as though sprung from the musical essence of that phrase, there arises, in sacred beauty, the holy form of the Gral, in the ascending figure of its special motiv (II.):

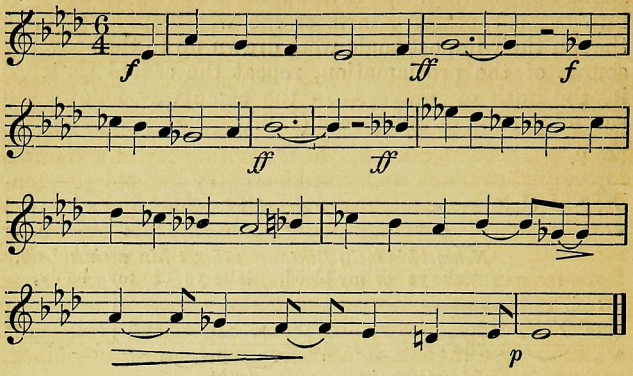
II. The Gral-Motiv.

(*Spätere Schlussform.*)
(Later termination.)



The music which has hitherto floated softly as though on the wings of Angels, reaches now for the first time a *forte*, with which again, in all the majesty of triumph, the third of the chief motivs connected with the Gral is introduced, the **Belief-Theme** (III.): that rhythmical melody sung by the children's voices in the ceremony: "*Der Glaube lebt! Die Taube schwebt, des Heilands holder Bote.*" "His love endures, the dove upsoars, the Saviour's sacred token."

III. The Belief Theme.



Given out by the wind-instruments, it sounds as the *Credo* of the whole knighthood united in the service of holy Love; and when the Gral-motiv has replied softly to its first gradually *diminuendo* annunciation, it commences again *piano* increasing to *fortissimo,* the theme being passed from one instrument to another as it descends from the top to the bottom of the scale: a picture of the union in brotherhood of a whole people, repeated in the ceremony at the end of the act during the mutual embracing of the knights after the love-feast. Dying away to *pianissimo* this grand chant is followed by its repetition in the higher notes of the scale, as the sign of heaven's blessing upon the earthly band of votaries; and it vanishes at last in the rolling of the kettle-drums, as though a dark curtain of clouds were drawn over this noble picture of religious peace. Thus closes the first portion of the prelude.

This mysterious rolling of the drums passes almost imperceptibly from the key-note of the prelude (*a* flat) to a shuddering tremolo on the sixth and tonic (*f-a* flat), wherewith the other side of the world-picture of the Gral, the picture of the sufferings of divine Love on this earth, in the hearts of men, is unveiled. With the fall of Amfortas, sin and need have forced their way even into the temple of the Gral. But in this prelude we must take the sounds of suffering and of lamentation that we now hear, in a wider sense. The Saviour, who gave His crucified life for

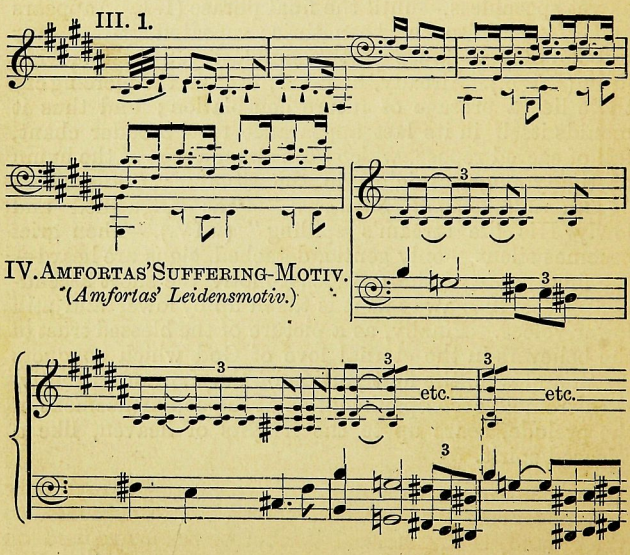
the atonement of mankind suffering from mortal sin,—the Saviour is daily crucified afresh in the sinful heart of every human being, and even the most devout souls of the community of believers are not free from the curse of renewed backslidings. Thus we hear the **Love-feast-motiv** again arise from the trembling notes of the bass, to at once break short on its anguished middle phrase (I. 1. a.), accompanied by the lamenting cry of a tremolo in the higher notes whose sudden entry depicts the rending of this world of sound by the death-agony of the crucifixion. The sighing middle phrase is then separately repeated. Twice over, in different modulations, this Love-feast-motiv is brought before us in this strenuous form, as though in constant-changing pangs of suffering; the third time, having on each repetition progressed a minor third higher, it appears in a sorrowful *d*-minor, and its middle-phrase is now repeated thrice over in close succession by varying groups of instruments, as though grief were heaped on grief. We see the Saviour torn by the spear-thrust of worldliness, bleeding in the anguish of the Passion, the wounds of the divine being transferred to the hearts of sinners, lamenting, yet in lamentations as yet speechless,—until the final phrase (I. 1. b.) appears and, after it also has been thrice repeated, passes over into an **elegiac-figure** of the simplest yet most moving form (I. 1. c.). Already, however, even in the piercing cry there lies a presage of future consolation; and thus it moulds itself in its last appearance to a broader chant, full of sacred repose, which forms later a part of the hymn of the younger knights in the ritual: "*Den sündigen Welten mit tausend Schmerzen,*" "as anguished and lowly His life stream's spilling" (XIV.).—Then grief becomes silent,—only gentle, detached sighs are heard—the final figure of the Love-feast-motiv, the short ascending phrase, dies away as it is taken up by lower and still lower voices. Finally, as a picture of the blessed trust of the believers in the eternal love of God which conquers death and woe, the first portion of the Love-feast-motiv, with tremolo accompaniment as at the commencement of the prelude, soars up to the heights of heaven, like a released spirit.

THE FIRST ACT.

The first scene of the first act is divisible into two portions: movement and peace, action and recital, are here separated from one another in broad masses.

I.

The first division shows us, at its commencement, Gurnemanz and the youths of the Gral in silent prayer, accompanied by the *réveillé* of the trumpets repeating the **Gral-motivs** of the prelude. As Gurnemanz bids the youths arise, their hasty movements are accompanied by a drastic variation of the **Belief-motiv** (III. 1.), which is so closely bound to all the actions of this knighthood of believers, as its musical soul: here it is as an anticipation of the motiv, followed by an energetic chivalric development, which is employed later to portray Amfortas' hasty, headstrong delight in warfare. But here it is soon suppressed by a heavy hand: "*Zeit ist's, des Königs dort zu harren*"—"'Tis time to wait then for our monarch," sounds out in the dragging tones of that figure which hereafter accompanies the litter-carried Amfortas, as a special **Suffering-motiv** (IV.).



Thus we have in close connection the splendour and the woe of the brotherhood of the Gral; but a third term is at once added, viz., Hope, in the harmonies of the **Promise** of "the guileless fool" (V.), which are united to the words addressed by Gurnemanz to the knights who have now come on the scene: "*Thoren wir, auf Lindrung da zu hoffen*"—"Fools are we, alleviation seeking," and "*ihm hilft nur Eines—nur der Eine,*" "When helps but one thing—and but one man."

V. The Speech of Promise.

Der Verheissungsspruch (*Thor-motiv*).

Durch Mit - leid wissend, der rei - ne Thor:
By pi - ty 'lightened a guile - less fool.

Der Mit- - leid - voll rei - ne Thor:
The com - passion - ate guile - less fool.

Har - re sein, den ich er - kor!
Wait for him, my cho - sen tool.

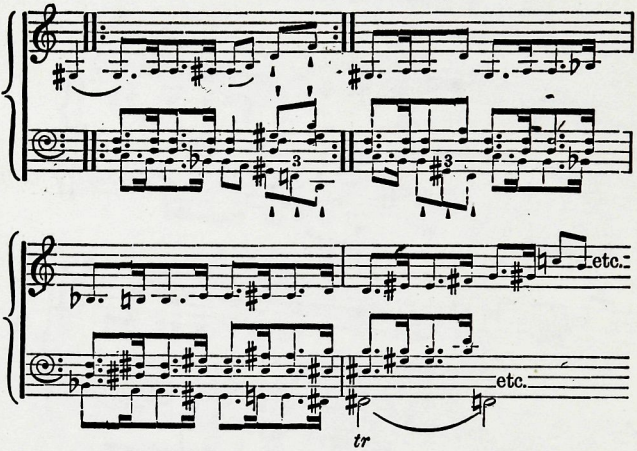
Har - - re sein!
Wait . . . for him!

Now there storms in a motiv of the second division, belonging to the appearance of Kundry: in a unison of rushing octaves it appears; a **stormy figure** (VI.), which one might describe as a "galloping motiv," springs from it, prancing upwards in chromatic intervals and short energetic leaps, till, reaching the treble with a *ff*, it hurls down the actual **Kundry-motiv** (VII.) through four octaves: "*Da schwingt sich die Wilde herab!*" "The wild witch has swung herself off." What here conveys only the movement of "Herabschwingen" (casting herself to the ground) is the musical symbol of the curse laid on

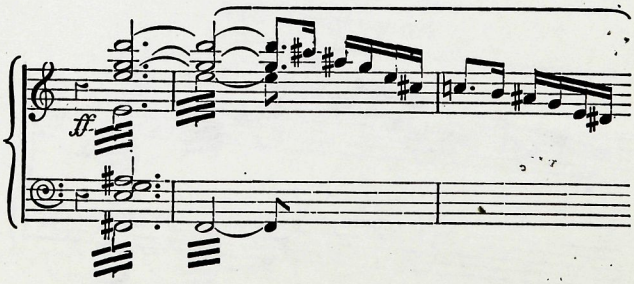
Kundry, which is attached to her throughout the drama in never-resting movement. It is the impulsive motion of passionate flight: the avenging spirit of her crime hunts the unhappy wretch from world to world. Again, it is the expression of her unappeasable, demonic laughter, the curse echoing from her own breast—a truly universal musical type of the curséd and cursing woman who now appears to us in this new presentation of her legendary form.

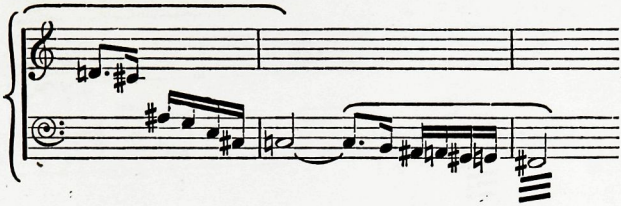
VI. Kundry's Stormy Figure.

(*Ritt-motiv*, Galloping motiv.)

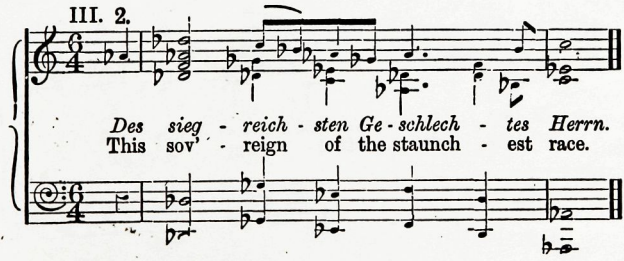


VII. Kundry-motiv.





Two short chords—softened down to the word "Balsam"—and, following Gurnemanz's question: "*Woher brachtest Du dies?*" "From whence bringest thou this?" a few simple, descending groups of thirds: this is the picture of the "helpful Kundry;" and in this sense we shall find the phrase repeated in the third act. But immediately on the mention of "Arabia," the home of her magic arts, we hear the threatening sound of three long-drawn chords, the chromatic harmonies of the **Sorcery-motiv** (IX.), which is associated later with "Kundry in the service of Klingsor." Thus the picture of this remarkable woman is presented to us in a few passing, characteristic phrases. Again the **Suffering-motiv** of Amfortas sets in with its typical accompaniment of syncopated chords. The mournful procession draws near, bearing Amfortas on his litter, and is greeted by Gurnemanz with heart-stirring lamentations. With the words "*des sieg-reichsten Geschlechtes Herrn,*" "This sov'reign of the staunchest race," a second variation of the **Belief-theme** is introduced. (III. 2.)

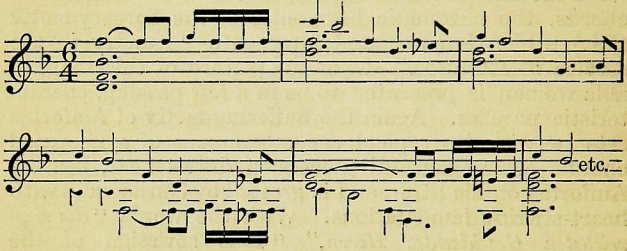


This melody, with its union of majesty and grace, is an echo of the memorable days of Titurel's rule, when as yet

no sin had stained the purity of the holy relics. But with the next line, "*als seines Siechthums Knecht zu sehn,*" "To stubborn sickness made a slave," we are reminded, by a phrase of the **Liebesmahl-motiv,** of the sufferings of the Saviour and the wound of the king.—A pause of rest follows; the litter is set down. Accompanying Amfortas' speech there is now developed from the Suffering-motiv, "*nach wilder Schmerzensnacht,*" "From madd'ning tortured night," a charming passage of swaying melody in canonic form: "*nun Waldes Morgenpracht,*" "Fair morn to woods invites," a phrase repeated later, notably in the third act, "*dieses Waldes Rauschen,*" "This forest's murmur."

VIII. The Forest's Murmur.

(*Das Waldesrauschen.*)



We cannot dwell upon all the details of the following dialogue, as, for instance, the **Gral-motiv** and **Klingsor** harmonies, accompanying the mention of Gawan's expedition; but we must remark that here for the first time the **Promise** (V.), "*Durch Mitleid wissend, der reine Thor,*" is given as an entire phrase of melody. It appears in all this scene, in fact in the whole Act, as a refrain at the close of every individual division. Here it follows on the allusion to the messengeress and her balsam, as it did on the first dialogue between Kundry and Gurnemanz; but, with her hasty motiv, she cuts short all further converse, and the retinue of the king once more takes up its progress towards the lake, while again the **Suffering-motiv** passes into the **forest-melody,** which dies away in the bass. In solitary silence Gurnemanz and Kundry remain behind in the quiet woods.

II.

The second division of the scene may be called "epic;" we must observe, however, that we have not here to deal with narrative alone. The first three speeches of Gurnemanz comprise, on the contrary, short answers to the hasty, childish remarks of the returning youths in reference to Kundry, and, without taking on the characteristic form of narration, they acquaint us further with the personality of the marvellous creature, who is still before our eyes upon the stage, in its threefold aspect, as messenger of the knights of the Gral—as the victim of a curse—and as the slave of the magic art of Klingsor.

The first speech of Gurnemanz (preceded by a peculiar, magician-like harmonisation of the **Gral-motiv**), following on Kundry's question: "*Sind die Thiere hier nicht heilig?*" "are not beasts here safe and sacred?" in its mention of the stormy flight of the messengeress from one quarter of the globe to another, is allied by chromatic musical figures, to the character of her "galloping-motiv."

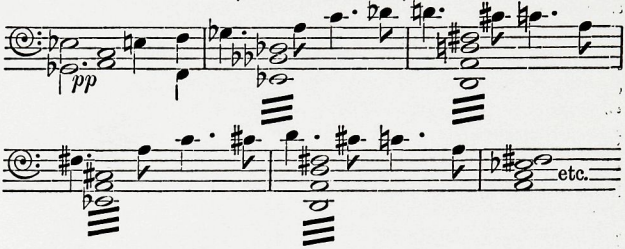
The second speech, an earnest narration of the strange, magical nature of Kundry, points to the origin of her curse, the glance of the mocked-at Saviour, with the **Love-feast-motiv** ("*zu büssen Schuld aus früherem Leben,*" "that of her sins she may be shriven from former life yet unforgiven"), and passes over into the mocking **Kundry-motiv,** which, on its repetition ("*übt sie nun Buss' durch solche Thaten,*" "seeking her shrift by such good actions") is followed by the harmonies of the **Promise** (V.). The accursed woman longs for the encounter of the redeeming love of this "Thor," and seeks it in the performance of blameless deeds of service. Both speeches terminate with rhymed lines conceived in a semi-popular style, as Gurnemanz adapts his language, in a spirit of fatherly good-humour, to the intelligence of the youths; these lines are intoned, in each speech, by a short variation of the **Belief-theme** ("*gut thut sie dann,*" etc., "Sure she does well," etc.).

The third speech ("*Ja,—wenn sie oft uns lange ferne blieb,*" "Aye, when she often far from us remained"), weaves the picture of Kundry in Klingsor's service upon the demoniacal woof of the **Sorcery-motiv** in ascending and descending chromatics, and thus a weird half-light is thrown over the whole situation. The narrative tone is now discarded, as Gurnemanz becomes deeply moved in recalling the harm which Klingsor has put upon the brotherhood. Thus the **Sorcery-motiv** passes, in forcible *crescendo,* into a stormy *forte;* the **Kundry-motiv** is hurled

from it: "*Du da!—wo schweiftest du damals umher?*" "Hey, thou!—where wert thou then roving around?" and is followed by a remarkable development of the chords of the **Sorcery-motiv**: "*Warum halfst du uns damals nicht?*" "Wherefore didst thou not help us then?"

✓ IX. SORCERY-MOTIV.

(*Das Zaubermotiv.*)



What now follows, though it is a recital of past facts, bears rather the character of a mournful meditation of Gurnemanz, who sinks into bitter grief at the remembrance of the terrible incident of the wounding of his king: "*O wunden-wundervoller heiliger Speer!*" "Oh, wounding, wonderful and hallowed spear!" With an energetic, swelling tremolo, in the anguish of grief, the middle and final sections of the **Love-feast-motiv** introduce this passionate outcry. We must here remark, that, in future, the *anguished* and wailing stress on the "minor second," of the middle section of the motiv (I. 1. a.) is used as a characteristic figure to denote the *wound* of the Saviour; whereas the ascending final section (I. 1. b.) depicts the sacred *spear* which dealt this wound. The narration of the sallying forth of the king is accompanied by a chivalric variation of the **Belief-theme** (III. 2 + 1), which gradually loses itself in the harmonies of the **Sorcery-motiv**: "*Ein furchtbar schönes Weib hat ihn entzückt,*" "a maid of fearful beauty turned his brain." This soft, weird picture is shattered by the mocking laughter (*ff*) of the **Kundry-motiv**, "*der Speer ist ihm entsunken,*" "the spear no longer holding," and now there follows the anguished portion of the Love-feast-motiv, which with the **elegiac** figure of its close (I. 1. c.) accompanies the broken words that terminate this powerful, dramatic speech: "*Die Wunde ist's, die nie sich schliessen will,*" "That wound it is which none

may make to close." After a short dialogue with the returning messengers, who report as to the condition of the king, while we hear once more the **Forest melody** (VIII.), Gurnemanz repeats, in quiet despair, this sentence as a refrain.

On the questions of the young men as to Klingsor, there follows now the principal long narration ("*Titurel der fromme Held,*" "Titurel, the pious lord," a variation of the **Belief-theme,** var. 1.), a finished, emotional and artistic piece of music which first portrays the "Descent of the Gral" in the mysterious strains of a new variation of the Belief-theme (III. 3), as though borne on the swaying wings of angels: "*Ihm neigten sich in heilig ernster Nacht,*" "anon to him, in midst of holy night," and the sacred "signs and tokens," the Gral and spear; then takes up the **Love-feast-motiv,** blended with the **Gral-motiv,** and with its middle phrase varied in the form of the mournful Good-Friday motiv of the third Act (XVIII.), "*darein am Kreuz,*" "which at the Cross," etc.

III. 3.

pp

Der Zeu - gen- gü - ter höch - stes Wunder
These signs and to - kens of a worth un-

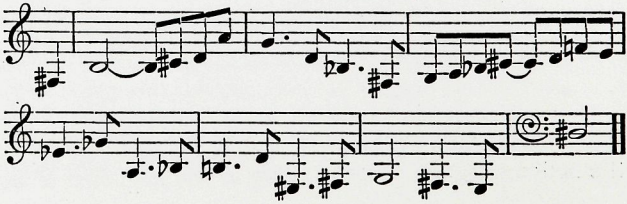
gut, das ga-ben sie in un - se-res Königs Hut
- told, The an-gels gave in - to our mon - arch's hold.

Then we are told of the "building of the sanctuary" for the holy relics, the building rising in the splendour of the

Gral-motiv. The sacred majesty of the Gral is displayed in the music; the theme winds itself gradually upwards, through the ascending and descending passages that accompany the chief motiv, and typify the seeking of the Gral by its chosen ones, "*auf Wegen, die kein Sünder findet,*" "By paths no sinners ever gained to," until it reaches the grandeur of the final phrase: "*des Grales heil'ge Wunderkräfte stärken,*" "with strength for high salvation's work doth dower," whereon the motiv is once more given out *dimin.*—In contrast to this picture, the dark element of the heathen sorcerer proclaims itself in a muffled tremolo of the bass. A kind of crafty delight in undisturbed practice of works of destruction and evil is expressed in the allied motivs of **Klingsor** (X.) and his **Sorcery** (IX.), which are united with a foreshadowing of the seductive cries of the *Blumen-mädchen* of the second Act. **Kundry's** mocking motiv, "*zu bösem Zauber Rath,*" "an infamous magic might be taught," finds also its place in this unholy bond of hate, temptation and destruction. The Klingsor-motiv dies away *pp*, and again the motiv of the **Gral** arises: "*Als Titurel—dem Sohne nun die Herrschaft hier verliehen,*" "When Titurel . . . with the royal might his son did dower"; but an energetic figure from the **chivalric** expansion of the **Belief-theme** carries Amfortas once more into the domain of misery, and thus connects the close of this narration with the preceding reminiscence of Gurnemanz, and though it is a reversal of the sequence of events, it has the effect of giving dramatic vitality to the epic nature of this scene. The **Spear-motiv**—as we must now learn to call the final section of the Love-feast-motiv—falls into the power of the **Kundry-motiv**, and the **Klingsor-motiv** is repeated. Sorcery has prevailed and holds the spear in its power, while its motivs imprison the whole recital in their magic circle.

X. The Klingsor-motiv.

(*Das Klingsormotiv.*)



But, as an epilogue to this great recital, we hear the short religious narration of the "prayer of Amfortas": the **anguish-figure** of the Love-feast-motiv expresses its fervour in stirring cries, the mystic harmonies of the **Gral** float up in swaying motion and portray the "*heilige Traumgesicht*" "sacred phantom face" that "*deutlich zu ihm spricht*" "from lips divine did chase these words," etc., and the entire melody of the **Love-feast-motiv** is heard in its full significance, and, as it dies away, brings in its train the complete **Promise** of the "Reine Thor." Thus ends the first scene of this Act.

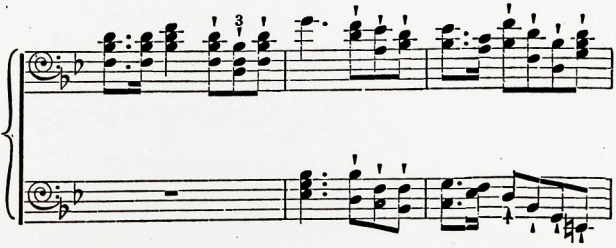
The second scene of the first Act shows us Parsifal on the Gral's domains, and subsequently the moving panorama and the ceremony of the Love-Feast.

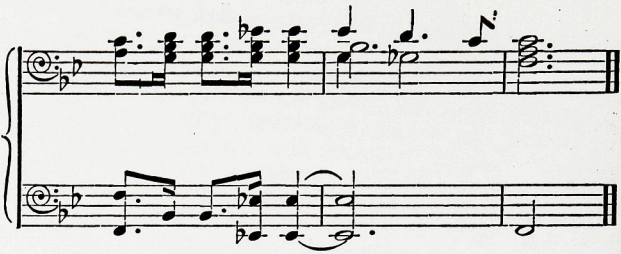
I.

The youths repeat, in soft quartett, the wonderful words of the "Promise," but do not finish this song: a piercing arrow flight shoots through the music; it is the onset of the **Parsifal-motiv** (XI.). A wild consternation manifests itself: the **Swan-motiv** of "Lohengrin" sends forth from far and nigh its tumultuous cries, shuddering and beating its wings in the death-agony. At the acme of this exciting crisis, Parsifal appears for the first time, with his youthful jubilant cry "*Gewiss, im Fluge treff' ich, was fliegt!*" "For sure; in flight I hit all that flies," whereon his motiv of primitive, joyous, and heroic *naïveté* is sounded forth in its complete form, for the first time.

XI. The Parsifal-motiv.

(*Das Parsifalmotiv.*)



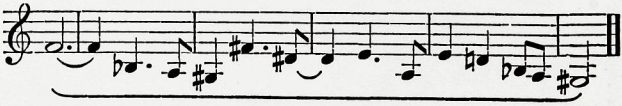


But this jubilant outbreak of childish pride is immediately silenced by the beautiful words of Gurnemanz's reproach.

We hear the quiet peace of the woods, with the strains of feathered songsters, (The **Forest-melody**, VIII.) the pure delight of the **Swan-harmonies** soaring above the holy lake, and then the broken, moving strains of these motivs as they mourn over the dying swan and, connected with the **Parsifal-motiv** ("*wild kindisches Bogengeschoss*," "a wild puerile shot of the bow") terminate in the **elegiac figure** of the Love-feast-motiv. This articulate speech of the music it is which calls forth an over-mastering revolution in the soul of the innocent youth; and, in deepest emotion, denoted by the combination of his energetic motiv with the cry of sacred compassion, he breaks in pieces bow and arrows and casts them from him. Compassion has entered into the heart of ignorance,—and now it is only with soft, trembling tones, as though questioning, that the commencement of his motiv, which ere this had leapt up so boldly, accompanies, in modest abashment, the questions and the ever-repeated answer, "*Ich weiss es nicht*," "I do not know," of the following dialogue. Here also, first appears the sorrowful inner tones of the **Motiv of Herzeleide**, (XII.), his mother, as he strives, and fails, to recall the many names by which she had called him.

XII. The Herzeleide-motiv.

(*Das Herzeleidemotiv.*)



A short orchestral piece closes this first portion of the dialogue; the youths return again to the bath of the king,

and some of them bear off, in mournful procession, the body of the swan: while the **Swan-motiv** is modulated into a gentle echo of the **Suffering-motiv** of the king's march.

The second portion of the dialogue is carried out in a more active strain. After a dreamy melodic picturing of Parsifal's awakening recollection of his mother, the **Herzeleide-motiv** being connected with the last word of every sentence of his, he breaks into the strain of his earlier motiv, with childlike glee: "*Im Wald und auf wilder Aue waren wir heim*" "The woods and the waste of moorlands were our abode." The whole of the following dialogue, in which Kundry also takes part, preserves this character of youthful love of wild adventure, reinforced by the energetic stress of Kundry's stormy **Galloping-motiv**, which is also of like form with the Parsifal motiv itself; "*Und einst am Waldessaume vorbei kamen glänzende Männer*" "Aye, and once along the hem of the wood passed by men all a-glitter." Kundry and Parsifal, in the increasing eagerness of recollection, take each the words from out of the mouth of the other, and the **Parsifal** and **Galloping-motivs** are rapidly interchanged. But on the announcement of the death of his mother (**Herzeleide-motiv**), this light-heartedness disappears; and the energy of the scene reaches its acme in Parsifal's passionate onslaught upon Kundry. The savage, agonised cry of the **Parsifal-motiv**, *ff*, is quickly repressed by the long-drawn notes of the **Herzeleide-motiv** sounding in the bass. Kundry rushes to the help of the swooning youth, and bears him water; and it is worthy of note that even the good action of the unhappy woman is accompanied by the **Kundry-motiv**, welling forth from the wild leaps of her **Galloping-motiv**.—All this passionate movement is then stilled in Gurnemanz's appeasing words of blessing: "*Das Böse bannt, wer's mit Gutem vergilt*" "He ousteth ill who doth give for it good." From the clear *thirds* of the "**helpful Kundry**" a melody is developed which appears again in the last Act; but here it soon sinks into the haze of the **Sorcery-motiv**. Kundry totters to the ground, overpowered by the magic-sleep, which, as the broken tones of her woeful cries for "*Ruhe*" (rest) grow fainter yet and fainter, weaves around her more and more closely the veil of the **Klingsor** and **Sorcery-motivs**, dragging her down until at last her form vanishes from our sight.

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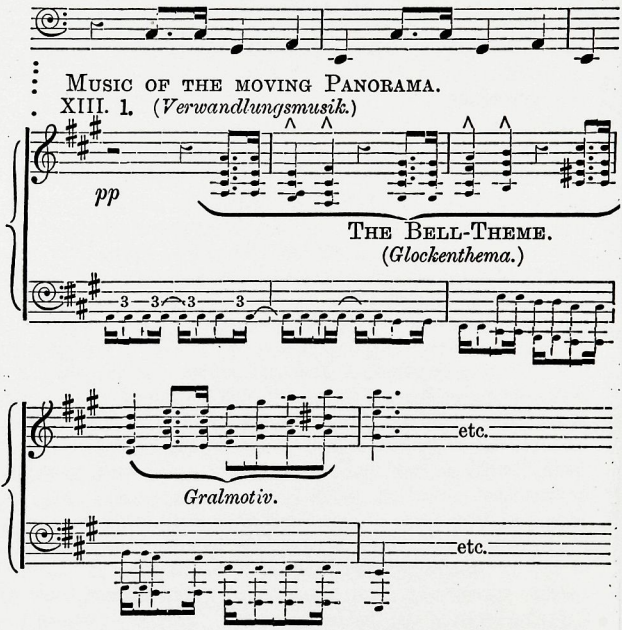
II.

Now appears the first soft whisper of the **Bell-motiv,** which, in constant variation, sounds through all the rest of this Act; by an alliance with the ascending Gral-motiv it here becomes a thematic figure (XIII. 1.) which, with a characteristic syncopic accompaniment and continually ascending harmonies (*a, c, e;* then *e, g, b*), introduces with its swaying motion, the marvellous change of Time into Space, in the simplest possible fashion.

XIII. The Bell-Theme.
(*Das Glockenthema.*)

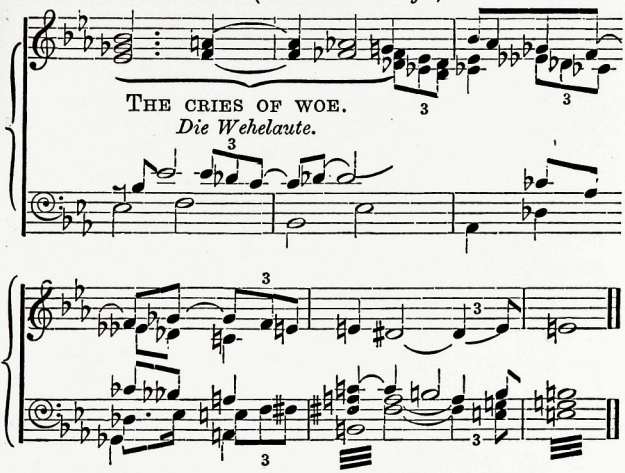


From this, after the religious intonation of the **Gral-motiv** (*"Wer ist der Gral?"* "What is the Gral?"), is developed the whole processional music that accompanies the moving panorama. We hear first the mighty ascent and descent of mournful dissonances, as though the steps of pilgrims wandering through the abrupt abysses of the

rocks; and then the descent of chromatic "thirds,"—their heart-piercing **cries of woe,** which develop into the **Saviour's cry** (XIV.) of the hymn of the youths: "*Den sündigen Welten mit tausend Schmerzen,*" "as anguished and lowly His life-stream's spilling."

XIV. THE SAVIOUR'S LAMENT.

(*Die Heilandsklage.*)

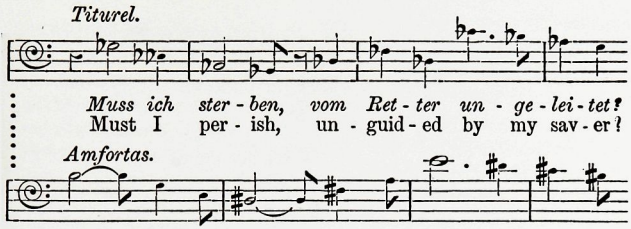


Thus it is as though we ourselves were actually wending our way, with the body of worshippers, through the domain of the suffering king, to the hall of the Gral. A twice-repeated summons of the trumpets in the **Love-feast-motiv**, sounding from the stage, and a prolonged peal of the bells in their own motiv (XIII.) announce our arrival in the sanctuary, which is now disclosed to us in a majestic *ff* proclamation of the **Gral-motiv.**

The great scene of the Love-feast, which here begins, may be divided into five parts, of which the first consists of three processional choruses, the second contains in its passionate extension the preparations for the unveiling of the Gral (Titurel's summons and Amfortas' reluctance), the third the unveiling of the Gral amid prayer and blessing, the fourth the partaking of the feast thus consecrated, again accompanied by a threefold chorus, and the fifth and last comprises the departing procession of the knights and the thrusting forth of Parsifal.

The first two processional choruses are still pervaded with the motiv of the Bells (XIII. 1.). While the knights, in the powerful and manly tones of bass unison, stride on to the "*letzten Liebesmahle*" ("the Holy Supper"), an accompanying motiv already prefigures the more hasty passage of the youths to the middle gallery of the temple. After the **Gral-motiv** has crowned *ff* the final lines of the men's chorus, and has died away in the tones of the bells, as all the knights are gathered in the hall, the youths above begin their wonderful song in the alto and tenor clefs,—a marvellous work of art; the voices are divided into three and four parts, and utter long-drawn sighs of lamentation, derived from the **"cries of woe"** of Amfortas, those chords which typify the primeval anguish of the human soul, yearning for the appearance of the "*Erlösungs-helden*" ("redeeming hero") in the sinful world (XIV.). Between the strains of this **Heilandsklage,** which is henceforth employed in thematic development, we hear the syncopic chords of the ascending **Bell-motiv,** depicting now the ascent of the children to the highest, invisible gallery of the dome; from whence, at the close of the song of the youths, the **Belief-theme** (III.), without accompaniment, and as though proclaimed from the mouths of angels, begins in softly-swaying motion of four-part song, its sacred hymn, "*Der Glaube lebt, die Taube schwebt,*" "His love downpours, the dove upsoars," etc. The soft motion of the wings of the Holy Spirit breathes through the consecrated space. A short refrain of four bars of the **Belief-theme** and the **Gral-motiv,** wedded to the hushed notes of the bells—and then deep silence reigns; we wait in religious expectancy the beginning of the divine mystery.

From the depths of the scene, as from a tomb, is heard the lonely call of the old king Titurel, like the sound of the undying conscience of man: "*Mein Sohn Amfortas, bist du am Amt?*" "My son Amfortas, art at thy post?" The melody of the words: "*Muss ich sterben, vom Retter ungeleitet?*" "Must I perish, unguided by my saver?" is employed again, developed as a theme with short, hasty syncopations, as accompaniment to Amfortas' words: "*Mein Vater, verrichte du das Amt!*" "My father, oh once again assume the office thou!" and also in his great outburst of despair: *Nein—lasst ihn unenthüllt!*" "No—leave it unrevealed!" which is introduced by the **motiv of Kundry.**



This burst of despair shows us all the sufferings of the wretched guardian of the Gral, in a splendid tone-picture, in which the melodies of the Gral are rent asunder by the tumultuous passion of grief. "*O Strafe—Strafe ohne Gleichen!*" "Oh chast'ning — chast'ning dire"—these heart-rending cries sounding out in the mournful tones of the **Heilandsklage** (XIV.). After this, under the purifying influence of the Gral-harmonies, the first storm of emotion is moderated: "*Nach ihm, nach seinem Weihegrusse muss sehnlich mich's verlangen!*" "For grace and for compassion yearning my panting heart is riven." Thus the yearning notes of the song, drawn from the depths of the soul, pass also into the **Gral-motiv**; and the **Heilandsklage** as it dies away *pp* ("*Aus tiefster Seele Heilesbusse,*" "in deepest soul's repentance") finds the same path, of prayer, to heaven ("*zu ihm muss ich gelangen,*" "by Him to be forgiven"), where now the vision of the unveiled and radiant relic weaves the mysterious strains of the **Liebesmahlspruch** around the half-whispered words that spring from deep suppressed emotion of the royal penitent.—But the ponderous **Suffering-motiv** (IV.) of the king breaks in upon the sacred calm, and unchains the **Sorcery-motiv** ("*Des eigenen sündigen Blutes Gewell,*" "my own life-current's iniquitous flood"), which, in its swaying upward and downward motion, is hurled down by the **Kundry-motiv** ("*in die Welt der Sündensucht mit wilder Scheu,*" "toward the world where sin has might.") From out the wound of the sorcery-seduced, fallen king ("*Geschlagen von desselben Speeres Streich, der dort dem Erlöser die Wunde stach,*" "inflicted by a stroke of that same spear," etc.), wells the hot sinful blood, as from the pierced side of the Redeemer pour bloody tears of compassion for sinful mankind. From the repetition of the tones of woe

of the **Schmerzensfigur** (I. 1. a.) the **Heilandsklage** rings forth. The **Gral-motiv,** striving to ascend, is forced to give place to the **Klingsor-motiv,** which now appears in all its demoniacal triumph, and stirs the hot blood of the sinner into tempestuous motion. Again the **Kundry-motiv** is let loose to accompany with its mocking laughter the despair, now roused to its highest pitch, of the sinner seeking for redemption. As in the close of the prelude, his last, fervent, beseeching prayer: "*Erbarmen, Allerbarmer, ach, Erbarmen!*" "Have mercy, God of pity, oh! have mercy!" is accompanied by the moaning **elegiac** development of the Liebesmahlspruch, which softly dies away in the broken echoes of the sighs of the king, now overcome by grief: "*Nimm mir mein Erbe,—schliesse die Wunde,*" "Take all I cherish—give me but healing!" Thus a second time the high flood of passion has ebbed; and over the bowed head of the now silent and prostrate sufferer there streams from above the peaceful greeting of the **Promise,** sung, without accompaniment, by boys' voices, as though by a host of angelic messengers of healing: "*Durch Mitleid wissend, der reine Thor: harre sein, den ich erkor!*" (V.). These gentle whispers are followed by the threatening bass-tones of the knights; and the cry of Titurel which opened this scene now brings it to its close, on the key-note: "*Enthüllet den Gral!*" "uncover the Gral!"

But the mystery of the scene waxes ever greater. Amfortas wearily arises, while the sighs of the **Liebesmahl-motiv** are heard, which motiv, during the unveiling of the chalice, gradually unfolds itself, from amid a tremolo of descending chords. Twilight has now completely set in, and the chant, "*Nehmet hin meinen Leib, nehmet hin mein Blut*" (I.), sounds from the height of the dome, sung by the boys' voices to the soft, undulating and rhythmless accompaniment of the orchestra. This chant is taken up in two separate sentences, each of which is followed, as in the prelude, by whispering arpeggios in the orchestra, and thus the sound-waves of the melody seem to vibrate through the soul of the beseeching king and through the hearts of the believing brotherhood. Thus the holy symbol spreads its eternal wings over the earth and over the most sacred depths of human nature. Yet there lurks a secret sorrow in this divine mystery, and the gentle refrain of the holy melody takes up into

itself, as in the close of the prelude, the **Wehelaute** of Amfortas. These cries, however, are lost in the momentary consolation of the healing influence, as the son, rapt in the contemplation of the Gral, which now illumines of its own wondrous light the surrounding darkness, forgets his anguish for an instant; and the father lifts up his voice from the tomb, in holy ecstasy: "*O heilige Wonne, wie hell grüsst uns heute der Herr!*" "celestial rapture! How light now the looks of the Lord!"

Soon thereafter the hushed refrain of the **Bells-motiv** passes into the legendary hymn of the chorus of boys, with its peaceful-moving melody, "*Wein und Brot des letzten Mahles,*" "wine and bread the Gral's Lord changed," which accompanies the supper of the knights. The youths then take up the same melody in lower tones. These choruses follow closely on one another, and are at once succeeded by the double-chorus of the knights with its swinging, heroic rhythm—"*Nehmet vom Brot—nehmet vom Wein,*" "Take of this Bread—take of this Wine," the first verse of which is accompanied by the **Bells-motiv,** the second by majestic passages of sound, as tho' the summons to warfare in the cause of holiness. The hymns of praise of the knights, the youths and the children are now intimately blended together in one soaring passage, composed of the various Gral-motivs, with which the music of the choirs, which had descended so majestically to earth, is lifted up once more to the ideal heights of the kingdom of divine love. With the complete working out of the **Belief-theme,** as in the prelude, the spirit of this love, thus invoked and lauded, then descends to consecrate the brotherhood of believers, amid their mutual embraces.

The **Wehelaute** (XIV.) of Amfortas then sound forth in the midst of the peaceful joy of the community; the wound bleeds afresh; the king is borne away on his litter. As in their entry, the departing procession of the knights is accompanied by the tones of the Bells and the repeated cries of the **Heilandsklage.** The theme of the "reine Thor" is also heard: but Parsifal remains unmoved by this cry. As the sound of the bells dies away, Gurnemanz turns to him, with short, broken and angry phrases from the **Thoren-motiv**: "*Weisst du, was du sahst?*" "Wist thou what thou saw'st?" But instead of an

answer from the silent youth, we have only the short phrase of inmost anguish and yearning, from the **Liebesmahlspruch** (I. 1. c.), which moved him in the lamentations of the king, yet left him ignorant of their meaning. Then, with a hasty variation of the **Parsival-motiv,** Gurnemanz thrusts him from the Temple, while the melody of the **Swan** is blended with the short rhymed sentences of the old knight. The departure of the old man, shaking his head and shrugging his shoulders in the bitterness of his disillusionment, is again accompanied by the same broken form of the "Promise."—Yet as though in heavenly consolation, the as yet unfulfilled oracle once more proclaims its significance, sounding gently from the height of the dome, in the complete form of the promise: "*Durch Mitleid wissend, der reine Thor!*" sung by a solitary alto voice, and dying into the chorus-melody, "*Selig im Glauben!*" "Blessed believing."—A few bass tones from the bells, and the curtain falls.

THE SECOND ACT.

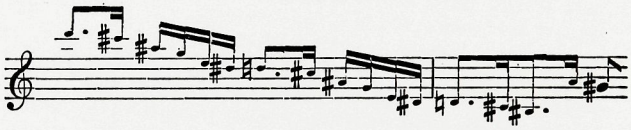
THE PRELUDE.

After we had been caught up, in the close of the first Act, to the heights of Heaven, the beginning of the second Act casts us down to the depths of Hell, from which, in the savage storm of the prelude, the whole demoniacal tumult and passion of the powers of evil and destruction break unrestrainedly forth. The **Klingsor-motiv** (XI.) given out in lowest bass, and developed in stormy, magic passages of ascending and descending chromatics, proclaims the fulness of its satanic power, and, at last storming the height of the scale in piercing *ff*, overmasters the whole of the first half of this tempestuous composition. But this fiery onset, storming upwards, carries us also to the woeful, long-drawn **Wehelaute** of Amfortas (XIV.), expressing here the anguished cries of the human soul enslaved by evil. Twice over they mount higher *ff*, and sound their lamentations far and wide; and, rising higher and more shrill in its mocking, the **Kundry-motiv** seven times sends its Hell-shriek down from above. In this second half, too, the **Klingsor-motiv** maintains its sway, at least by the mastering tones of its final phrase, which are blended with the magic passages of the **Sorcery-motiv**, as though in the wizard gestures of invocation. After the third and last attack by the **Wehelaute** chords upon the **Kundry-motiv**, the latter appears for the fifteenth time, and hurls itself down, through three octaves, to the abyss. The curtain rises, and we see ourselves in the castle of the sorcerer, and behold him ready to summon up the wretched woman to assist him in his destructive attempt to pervert the nature of the devout and innocent youth.

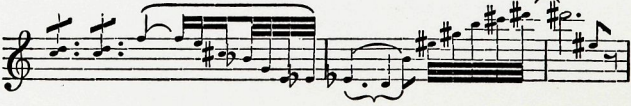
In the short scene between Klingsor and Kundry, the most gruesome devilry of the powers of evil is summed up, and concentrated in the satanic might of the magician. The motiv, which, at the very commencement, lurks and crawls like a snake from the bottomless pit, and winds itself around the figure of the master of ill—the **Sorcery-motiv**, and its darksome blood-relation, the **Klingsor-motiv**: these wield their power over the whole following scene and portray the special exercise at this moment of the sway of Evil over the woman, by their union with the

seldom silent motiv of Kundry. Amid these three principal motivs, the reference to the "*thörigen Knaben*" "foolish youth," who is approaching, sounds out significantly, and is joined to a fragment of the **Parsifal-motiv**; at the very beginning, with the words: "*Schon harrt mein Zauberschloss des Thoren*" "Lo! how my magic tow'r entices yon fool"; afterwards with "*Den Gefährlichsten gilt's nun heut zu bestehn*" "The most dangerous must to-day be withstood"; then in the short, contemptuous phrase "*Ha, wer dir trotzte, löste dich frei*" "Ha, He who spurns thee setteth thee free"; and, at the close of the scene: "*Du da, kindischer Spross*" etc., "Thou there, babyish sprig." But the **Wehelaute**, those piercing cries in "thirds," which we have heard before from Amfortas, now make their way, as anguished sighs of the victim of demoniacal art, through the hell-mist of the Sorcery-harmonies, and perhaps in these we may recognize the crowning-point of the devilish force that pervades the whole scene.

Klingsor has forced Kundry to him with his own special motiv, ("*Urteufelin, Höllenrose!*" "She-Lucifer, Rose of Hades"!); then the lamenting **Wehelaute** press forward through the long-drawn harmonies of the former, as the magician peers into the nether darkness. With a horrible shriek, as though from one half-wakened in terror from deep sleep—which cry is torn from the **Kundry-motiv** with a savage, rebounding terminal phrase—the form of the summoned woman now appears.



At the hasty, mocking summons of her master, she strives in vain, in the midst of her groans and shudders, for words or sounds of reply: then, as her **Sorcery-motiv** is heard in short sighing phrases, her tortured words "*Sehnen,—Sehnen!*" "Yearning, yearning!" are given in the **Wehelaute** of the **Heilandsklage**, from which they pass on into a treacherous figure which has already sprung upwards, with a trill, from Klingsor's contemptuous triumph over the knights of the Gral, and which is here developed from the Kundry-motiv in a half yearning, half rebellious, upward bound: "*Da—dient' ich!*" "I served them!"

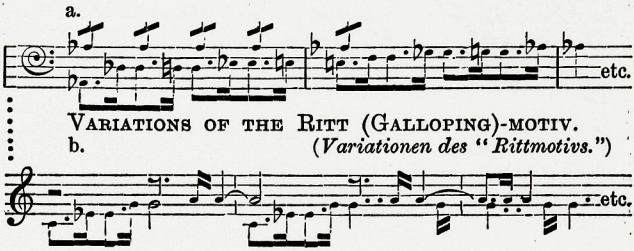


This phrase, closely welded to the **Kundry-motiv**, and with a mocking echo of its own, accompanies the whole short, drastic and energetic dialogue: "*Ich will nicht,*" "I will not" (an anguished reference to the elegiac figure, I. 1. c.)—"*Du musst,*" "Thou must"—"*Du kannst mich nicht halten*"—"Thou never canst hold me," "*Aber dich fassen,*" "But I can force thee"—"*Du?*" "Thou?"—"*Dein Meister,*" "Thy master"—"*Durch welche Macht?*" "and by what pow'r?" until at its terrible crisis: "*Haha! bist du keusch?*" "Ha, ha! art thou chaste?" the solitary pause is made in this restless, tumultuous scene of demoniacal contention.—A pause, but no rest, for here all the tumult and passion in the breast of Klingsor himself boil up, and, in the dreadful loneliness of his sinful heart, rave forth in the degradation of fearful memory, as they seem to tear his being in pieces. The **Klingsor-motiv** is then given to the very words of the magician: "*Furchtbarer Triebe Höllendrang,*" etc., "Terrible lust in me once rife." But, for his wicked consolation, the picture of the suffering Amfortas appears as a counterpart of the suffering Klingsor: we hear the **Wehelaute** and then the **Suffering-motiv** (IV.), and finally both together, after a shrill, broken and dissonant ascent of the **Gral-motiv**: "*Bald, so wähn' ich, hüt' ich mir selbst den Gral!*" "and soon—I feel it—I shall possess the Gral."

Beginning in the short conflict of the dialogue, and pursued throughout these cries of Klingsor which finish in raging defiance, there have already sounded shrill, demoniacal triplets of chords, as though they were the lamenting and mocking voices of the inner turmoil of a soul overpowered by the magic force of evil,—once more their convulsive strains are dissolved in the broken and syncopated **Wehelaute** of Amfortas, as Kundry laments over his weakness and over the weakness of all who have fallen through her, the weakness that is again to bring a fresh victim to her arms.—In vain her agonised defiance of the conquering might! The path of her redemption through love carries her, in the bonds of the curse on her own guilt, through the poisoned pastures of the sorcery of the senses: "*nur wer ihr trotzte, löste sie frei!*" "Ha, he who spurns thee setteth thee free." Then sounds *p* the **Parsifal-motiv**. Klingsor stands on the ramparts of the keep, watching the assault of the castle by the headstrong boy, his conflict, his victory over the knights, and his arrival

in the magic garden, and follows the scene with satanic scorn, sure of a speedy victory, recounting it to Kundry, who gradually disappears from sight, her cries of woe passing into unearthly laughter.

The attack upon the castle, witnessed by Klingsor, is a musical composition full of fiery, pulsating life : it rushes into the magic circle with the fresh breath of a spring-breeze, and deals its blows around with the irresistible impulse of *naïf* youth.



A variation of the **stormy figure of the Ritt-motiv** (a) surging up with a swell of octaves in unison, as though urged onwards by the trills of Kundry's laughter, carries the music, with the words: "*Sie weichen, sie fliehen,*" "They waver,—they're routed," to a brilliant song of victory in the complete melody of the **Parsifal-motiv.** A short intermediary passage follows: "*Seine Wunde trägt Jeder nach heim,*" "with their wounds they are all running home," in which the quick strokes of the **Thoren-motiv** are again dealt out, wherefrom the **Parsifal-motiv** springs forth once more triumphant. But the hero's motiv is now muffled, in its gleeful ascent, by a low tremolo, then appears again in soft long-drawn tones, as the youth gazes around him in wonder; and at last, in a graceful figure that presages the melody of the flower-voices, it sinks back into the unearthly swirl of the harmonies of Kundry's laughter. This is the accompaniment to the treacherous beauty of Klingsor's tone-picture: "*Ha, wie stolz er nun steht auf der Zinne, wie lachen ihm die Rosen der Wangen, da kindisch erstaunt in den einsamen Garten er blickt,*" "Ha! how proudly he stands on the rampart! His countenance how smiling and rosy, as childlike, surprised on the desolate garden he looks!" But Kundry is already "gone to work," and the talisman has been well chosen wherewith this *Thor*, like the rest, is to be entrapped: it

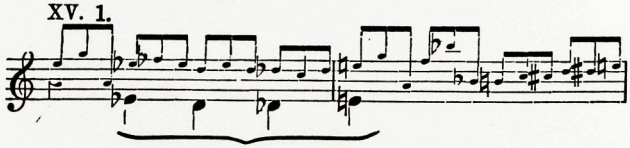
is the **motiv of his mother** (XII.), which now is sounded in soft tones; with her dying greeting temptation shall stamp the Hell's seal of its kiss on the soul of the boy. With the **Klingsor-motiv** crashing out of *ff* down to deep *p*, as in the beginning of the prelude, the tower sinks down with the sorcerer, to give place to the magic-garden in all its supernatural, oriental splendour of wonder-flowers, the luxuriant harvest of the forcing-house of Hell.

II.

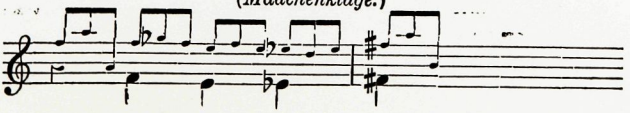
In the following scene between Parsifal and the *Zaubermädchen* (magic maidens, or magic flowers), in which the richest wealth of melody flows on in never-ceasing stream, the oft-repeated **Motiv of Parsifal** marks out the boundaries of the separate sections.

The **Parsifal-motiv** ushers in the first division which, with a fresh transformation of the **Stormy-figure** in the character of the preceding Storming-motiv, (b) depicts in its rapid working-out, the hurried assembling of the frightened maidens. Two trios of solo singers, and two choirs of three-part voices, flock on to the scene, one after the other, in hasty movement and with short, excited cries. From the expressive chromatic sequence of the close of that figure, repeated in strenuous emotion, the first theme of the maidens (XV. 1.), given out *f*, tears itself loose: it leaps and flutters in the excitement of its accompaniment of triplets, ever pressing higher, depicting the ever-waxing anxiety of the seekers in their confused thronging together, while there is woven with it the song of the soloists, which gives to the whole its ground-form of lamenting chromatic intervals: "*Mein Geliebter verwundet!—Wo find' ich den Meinen?*" etc. "My beloved is wounded!—Where is my lover?" etc.

XV. 1.

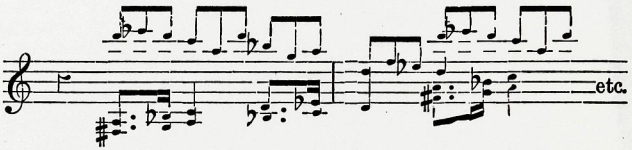


CRY OF THE MAIDENS.
(*Mädchenklage.*)



This is the **Maidens' cry**, which will later gain still more intense meaning and effect, as the expression of the yearning for redemption of the whole of this world of illusion. At the culminating point of the general excitement—when the whole choir unites in the questioning cry "*Wo ist der Feind?*" "Where is the foe?" and the theme of the principal soloists rises from *e* to *b*, with the last "*Wehe*" "Horror," a second theme appears, viz., XV. 2. The maidens have perceived Parsifal: "*Da steht er!*" "There stands he," cry the terrified soloists, in hasty tones, while the chorus repeats the cry, and takes up at once a rapid, ascending figure of accompaniment, in thirds: "*Seht ihn dort! seht ihn dort!*" "See him there," etc. This figure is woven also into the orchestral accompaniment to the new theme, which, on its part, is employed as an alluring, coquettish expression of *naïf* astonishment, though here it expresses rather the terrified whispers of the general excitement.

XV. 2.



Seht ihn dort! Seht ihn dort!
See him there! See him there!

This theme is also now carried upward, in constant, rapid ascension, until it is again relieved by the first theme: "*Weh! weh! er schlug uns're Liebsten*" "Why hast thou slaughtered our lovers?" etc. This reaches a new crisis, on the constantly repeated triplets of the chromatic close, with a loud cry of the whole choir, ending suddenly in *e* flat: "*Verwünscht sollst du sein!*" "accurst mayst thou be!"—whereupon the **Parsifal-motiv** makes its forcible entry into the new key.

The **Parsifal-motiv**, in its complete expansion, marks the leap of the youth from the height of the ramparts; his first *naïf*, laughing words: "*Ihr schönen Kinder, musst' ich sie nicht schlagen?*" "Ye lovely maidens, had I not to

slay them?" are accompanied by the further development of the motiv, in soft long-drawn notes, as in Klingsor's picture of this scene. Their wild, restless terror now appeased by these words of friendly truce, the maidens reply *p*, in altered tone, once more yielding to their natural leaning to gaiety; thus their answer is couched in the coquettish tones of their **second theme**, which now reveals itself in all its alluring charm, and accompanies the questions of the soloists and Parsifal's answers, in its softly singing development. In the second portion of this short division: "*So willst du uns wohl nicht schlagen?*" "then wilt thou not treat us badly?" the **first theme** again asserts its supremacy. The whole chorus unites in the final repetition of the closing figure: "*Wer spielt nun mit uns?*" "Who'll sport with us now?" and, after Parsifal's gleesome reply, they all fall to laughing and dancing, whereon once more the **Parsifal-motiv** is developed as an interlude, amid the trills of the alluring maidens.

The first portion of the **Parsifal-motiv** is wreathed with a charming garland of the melodies of the magic flowers. While one portion of the maidens has withdrawn, to deck itself in secret with flower-cups and to masquerade as living flowers, the remaining half dances lightly around their new-found playmate. The whole pantomime is carried out as a merry frolic of lightsome children, and completely without a suggestion of purposed sensual seduction. It is the gracefulness of nature, in her full, intoxicating yet innocent mirth, which weaves the charm of an inward, beneficent wonder around her guileless captive. With the words: "*Wir spielen nicht um Gold*" "For gold we do not play," the maidens take up again their coquettish **second theme**, which rises aloft in a rapid flight of Trills, as the masqueraders return; and now a short scene of rivalry begins, accompanied by the former triplet theme, which sinks down lower and lower, in slackened motion, and passes over into a peacefully swaying figure. From this rocking rhythm is developed (in $\frac{3}{4}$ tempo) the gently-swinging melody of the long-spun "*Kosegesang*," "caressing-song" (XV. 3.): "*Komm—komm, holder Knabe!*" "Come, come! Handsome stripling."

XV. 3. CARESS MELODY.

(*Kosemelodie.*)

Komm', komm', hol - der Kna - be!
Come, come, hand - some strip - ling!

Komm', komm', lass . . mich dir
Come, . . come, . . I'll . . . be . . thy

blühen! Komm'! Dir zu Wonn' und
flower! Sweet - ly danc - ing, And

La - be gilt mein min-ni-ges Mü-hen!
rip - pling Bliss un - shadow'd I'll shower!

3

Komm', ... hol - -
Come, ... hand - -

XV. 4.
(ALLUREMENT FIGURE.)
(*Schmeichelfigur.*)

des Gar - -
the Gar - -

- - - der Kna - be! etc.
- - - some strip - ling! etc.

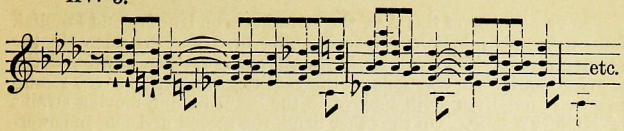
- - - tens Zier.
- - - den's pride.

While the chorus develops the melody, the soloists introduce a marvellous figure denoting **allurement** (see above XV. 4.), first in ascending, yearning notes, and afterwards embellished with short triplets of semiquavers: "*Komm, komm, o holder Knabe,*" etc. The second half of the troop of maidens now returns, similarly bedecked, and its solo-voices join in the song, while both choirs unite in the development of the principal melody, till at last all the voices break forth together into the phrase "*Dir zur wonnigen Labe gilt unser minniges Müh'n!*" (see above; but

literally, "Our loving labours are all for thy sweet refreshing"). The **allurement-figure** (XV. 4.) weaves around the innocent, astonished senses of Parsifal its sweet-scented veil: "*Wie duftet ihr süss! seid ihr denn Blumen?*" "How sweet is your scent! are ye then flowers?" and it is this figure, also, which in the following dainty dialogue of the soloists, "*Des Gartens Zier und duftende Geister,*" "The garden's pride and odour we've given," forms the charmingly varied and developed principal theme, while the **caress-melody** winds through the accompaniment. At last the chorus breaks gently in: "*Nicht karge den Blumen den Sold*" "Grudge not the flowers their due," and associates itself with the expressive, and as though dying, words of the whole body of soloists, "*Wir welken und sterben dahinnen,*" "we swiftly must wither and perish." With this the **allurement-figure,** like petals of sun-steeped flowers wafted lightly by the soft breath of summer, passes *crescendo* in a trill, after a few sorrowful phrases of the **Maidens' Lament,** into the returning melody of the **Caress-song.** This second song of the maidens, which suggests the longing of the flowers for redemption, is brought to a close by their individual coaxing prayers for loving play with their companion, wherewith they close around him and encircle him in childish caresses, to the strains of their first song ("*An deinen Busen nimm mich!*" etc., "unto thy bosom take me," etc.).

The **Parsifal-motiv** is now heard again, in gentle *p* and in the minor key, as though in bashful resistance, as he says: "*Soll ich mit euch spielen, entlasst mich der Enge,*" "If I am to play, ye must widen your bowers;" these words are sung by their impatient playfellow in the rhythmical tones of the **Maidens' cry** (XV. 1.). A third or **last theme** of the maidens (counting the two songs, it is the fifth theme) is here introduced (XV. 5.), which seems to spring from the repetition of the Parsifal-motiv; it is a passage of chords leaping up and down, as though light-footed sprites were dancing hither and thither, and is constantly interrupted by short, resisting phrases in the bass as the cries and counter-cries follow one another in rapid succession: "*Was zankest du?—Weil ihr streitet —Wir streiten nur um dich—Das meidet,*" "Why quarrel?—'Tis your riot.—We quarrel for thee.—Then quiet," etc.

XV. 5.



As the chorus takes its part in the strife, somewhat of the excitement of the first theme appears in the music, and the delicate colour of the frolicsome second theme tints the song: "*Die Blumen lässt du umbuhlen den Falter!*" "Wouldst see the butterfly wooed by the flowers?" Then, after the quick interchange of the song by the whole troop of maidens ("*Nein mir gehört er—Nein uns—Ja mir,*" "See he wants me—no, me—me rather!") the **last theme** (XV. 5.) brings this whole play of sweet scents and flowing sounds to a hasty close in the outbreak of the **Parsifal-motiv** (in *a* flat, as at the commencement): "*Lasst ab! ihr fangt mich nicht!*" "No more! You'll catch me not!"—while this theme sinks, on its part, under the magic fetters of the **Thor**-harmonies: "*Parsifal!—weile!*" "Parsifal!—tarry!"—Kundry's first summons!—

For a while the **Thor**-harmonies (V.) sway above the astonished youth; then the **Herzeleide-motiv** sounds in its inmost strains: "*Hier weile, Parsifal! Dich grüsset Wonne und Heil zumal!*" "Here bide thee, Parsifal!—where joy and gladness on thee shall fall." Marvel now is turned to magic. In clear gently-rocking strains, the sweet voice, that sounds from the unseen, addresses itself now to the maidens; and it is with the elegiac melody of their cry (XV. 1.) that they are dismissed to their wounded cavaliers, and with which, softly lamenting ("*Dich zu lassen, dich zu meiden,*" "Thus to leave thee, thus to sever"), they take one after the other their grudging leave of their beloved companion. Then the whole chorus, singing *crescendo* the **last theme** (XV. 5.), "*Leb' wohl, du Holder, du Stolzer,*" "Farewell, thou fair one, thou proud one!" with a coquettish spring from the *f*, ("*Du-Thor,*" "Thou—Fool,") rushes off, in light laughter, towards the castle.

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III.

The great scene of this Act, the scene between Kundry and Parsifal, falls naturally into two divisions. The first, and considerably the shorter, division is devoted to the seductive network spun around the wonder-imprisoned emotions of the youth by the bitter-sweet reminiscence of forgotten mother's love, in the beautiful and moving strains of Kundry's song. On the other hand, the second division, in powerfully dramatic excitation, and, with all its length of development, yet gaining climax of the strongest possible concentration, shows us : the awaking of Parsifal to the moral consciousness of his office of saviour of mankind, the struggles of Kundry for redemption through love, and the final victory of wisdom-enlightened purity over the blindfold desire of the sinning woman.

As at the close of the preceding scene, it is the **Thor-harmonies** which usher in the first dialogue of the "nameless one" and her who proclaims his name ; with them, after Kundry's short recital of the death of his father, the **motiv of Herzeleide** is again associated in her soft, long-drawn monologue. But a short, *inward* figure, a foretaste of the melody of Kundry's **Hingebung** (Self-abandonment), (XIX.) is welded to this : "*Ihn dir zu künden, harrt' ich deiner hier !*" "Here have I tarried this but to disclose." Thus, as though with the light touch of a spirit, the first outlines of the picture of love are drawn upon the soul of the listening boy, to whom the full revelation of its mysterious two-fold nature shall soon be unfolded.

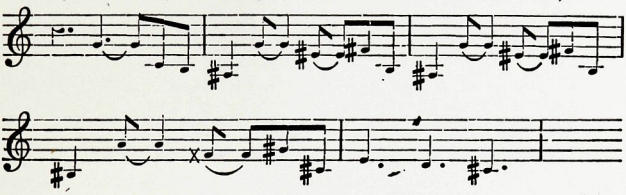
The whole of this first division is brought under the sway of Kundry's lengthy narration of his mother's history.—The strains of **Sorcery** sound from out the "*fernen, fernen Heimath*" ("far, far from hence my home") of the narrator, and lead the way to the pure sphere of gentle love, of the cradle-song : "*Ich sah das Kind an seiner Mutter Brust*" "I saw the child upon its mother's breast." This lovely cradle-melody, already hinted at in the music, breathes throughout the spirit of the **Herzeleide-motiv**, brought into the domain of childhood, and uniting in itself, in a marvellous fashion, the elements of Idyll and of Elegy. The motiv itself appears in the interpretation of **Herzeleide's** name : "*Das Leid im Herzen*" "though filled with sadness," (literally = suffering at heart), and it puts aside its elegiac character, in a more lively variation ; $\frac{9}{8}$ (XII. 1.) accompanying the words : "*als ihren Schmerzen zujauchzte ihrer Augen Weide*" "When, shouting gladness, it gave her sorrow's contradiction !" wherewith the first verse comes to the close of its melody.—The second verse is conceived

in the same style and from the same motivs: "*Gebettet sanft auf weichen Moosen,*" "In beds of moss 'twas softly nested," as far as "*der heisse Thau der Mutterthränen,*" "Beneath the dew of mother's weeping."—

XII. 1.

PASSIONATE VARIATION OF THE HERZELEIDE-MOTIV.

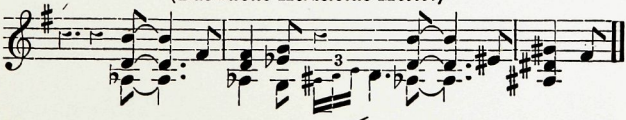
(*Leidenschaftliche Figuration des Herzeleide-Motives.*)



Then follows an intermediary passage ("*Den Waffen fern,*" "afar from arms") characterised by the distant clang of weapons sounding in a low motiv, in $\frac{3}{4}$ time in the bass, with a swirling tremolo in the higher register (in $\frac{9}{8}$ time), from whence proceeds again the development of the former **passionate variation** (XII. 1.), which gains ever fresh energy ("*Hörst du nicht noch ihrer Klage Ruf,*" "Hear'st thou not still her lamenting voice?"), and, with rapid ascent ("*wann sie suchend dann dich ereilt,*" "to welcome thee hastening home") storms up to the jubilant close: "*wann dann ihr Arm dich wüthend umschlang,*" "when her wild arm around thee was laid," and dies away in sudden *dim.* ($\frac{3}{4}$): "*ward dir es wohl gar beim Küssen bang?*" "Wert thou of kisses so much afraid?"—The last portion of the song is sung to a **second Herzeleide-motiv** (XVI.) breathing out the deep sorrow of pained remembrance, in melancholy sighs.

XVI. SECOND HERZELEIDE-MOTIV. (LOVE'S WOE.)

(*Das zweite Herzeleide-Motiv.*)



Doch ihr Wehe du nicht ver - nah-mest
But thou didst not be - hold her pain.

Smarting pain, woe and mourning of the love of mother to child, and soon hereafter of child to mother, utter their piercing moans in this motiv, while a short triplet-figure, expressing inmost shuddering, is joined to this as a characteristic theme with an emphatic *sf.*—Thus the song reaches its mournful, halting, quiet end with the echo of the **first Herzeleide-motiv**: "*und—Herzeleide starb!*" "and Heart's affliction died!"

A hurried cry of Parsifal breaks forth from a short *crescendo* passage of heaving syncopated chords in unison; and again it is the moving motiv of **Love's woe** (XVI.) which is heard in his cry and lends its anguished accents to his words: "*Holde Mutter—deiner vergessend,*" Sweetest mother—thus to forget thee." Even to the sweet seductive melody of Kundry's consolation (*War dir fremd noch der Schmerz,*" "Hadst thou ne'er been distrest"), the youth, sunk in brooding mourning, has no answer save a dreamy sigh in the same low tone of lament: "*Die Mutter—konnt' ich vergessen!*" "My mother—could I forget her?" But now there suddenly arises the vision of the holy Spear, a warning of his forgetting of the sufferings of the holy community, and the **Spear-motiv** from the Liebesmahlspruch sounds out: "*Ha, was Alles vergass ich wohl noch!*" "Ah, must all be forgotten by me?" For contrast to this, the **Kundry-motiv** is now forced for the first time into this scene; and, in its imperious motion, the 'Rose of Hell' presses into the heart of the suffering fool the thorns of the inmost grief of undreamt-of love's delights. This she effects with the traitorous strains of her **Sorcery-motiv** ("*Die Liebe lerne kennen, die Gamuret umschloss,*" "Of love oh learn the fashion which Gamuret once knew"), and with its resolution into the jubilant sounds of the **passionate variation** of the first Herzeleide-motiv (XII. 1.): "*als Herzeleid's Entbrennen ihn sengend überfloss,*" "When Heart's affliction's passion had fired his bosom through," which latter theme now mounts *f*, into the **Kundry-motiv**. Under the same soft veil of her magic (spun out by the violoncellos in expressive treble notes, *pp*) she stamps on the mouth of the youth "*der Liebe ersten Kuss,*" "this first—kiss of Love."—The last, halting sighs of this chromatic motiv press suddenly together and pass into the form of a fresh, mighty symbol of the anguish of life; this symbol is the **Schmerzen-figure** (anguish) of the Liebesmahlspruch,

which, as in Gurnemanz's recital of Amfortas' seduction, tears itself in sudden strength from the sighs, and drags in its train the **Wehelaute** (XIV.) of Amfortas, *ff*, in wild turmoil. "Amfortas"—this second cry of recollection of Parsifal marks out the great, decisive rent which divides the scene into its two parts, and turns the whole course of the drama from Need and Sin—to Redemption.

The second division of the scene may be divided, according to its contents, into three parts: Parsifal's vision of the suffering Saviour—Kundry's narration of her curse—and the last dialogue of both, culminating in the outburst of Kundry's despair, her curse on Parsifal.

The first portion of *Parsifal's Vision*, his loud cries of woe, while in an instant he feels the sin-smart of Amfortas tearing its way into his own heart, burnt in by the kiss of Kundry—this portion is drenched through and through with the **Wehelauten** and with a stormy host of savage passages from the **Kundry-motiv** ("*O Elender! Jammervollster!*" "Oh! misery! lamentation!"). We hear also once again the piercing tones of the **Anguish-figure**, ("*Die Wunde sah ich bluten*," "I saw thy wound a-bleeding,") and it is noteworthy that, with the words: "*Nein, nicht ist es die Wunde*" "No! no! this is not the spear-wound" the **Sorcery-motiv** is transformed into the **Leidensmotiv** (suffering motiv, IV.), and then, with a hasty passage of ascending, stormy phrases, *piu f*, the cries of the **Wehelaute** set in again, followed by a hurling down of the **Kundry-motiv**. This is the climax of the first lament.—

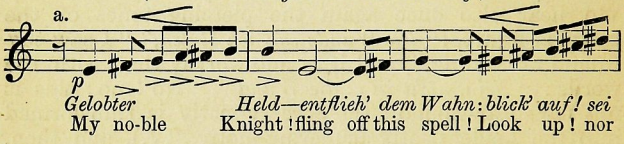
As a contrast to this, there follows the vision of the Gral mystery, as the dying syncopes of the latter savage motiv are purified by the lofty harmonies of the Gral: the **Liebesmahl**-theme asserts its mystic sway, and "*Erlösungswonne durchzittert weithin alle Seelen*" "Redemption's rapture—is trembling far through ev'ry spirit" in the wondrous circle of the divine rite.—But the **Kundry-motiv** tears asunder the heart of man with fresh passionate woe; the **Heilandsklage** (XIV.), as in the close of the prelude, sounds in opposition to the joy of redemption, as an echo from the soul of sinners. Yet, as from the depth of the all-compassionate heart of God, dwarfing every suffering of man in the majesty of its horror, the cry rises up "*Erlöse, rette mich aus schuldbefleckten Händen*" "Recover, save me from the hands that guilt has sullied!" sounding in the **Liebesmahlspruch** which

ends in the stressful **Schmerzensfigur**. With the sighs of the **Heilandsklage**, its own grievous echo dies away in Parsifal's last, fervent, imploring prayer: "*Wie büss' ich Sünder solche Schuld*" "what can retrieve the crime abhorred?" With this also there has come to pass the great change in Kundry's soul; for as she bends over the youth, who kneels in holy rapture, he is no longer the victim of her temptations, forced on her by the magic of Klingsor, but the "*Gelobte Held,*" "noble knight," the ever longed for, beloved "*Heiland,*" "Saviour," who shall bring redemption through his love even to the queen of the senses.

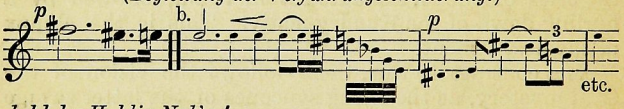
This change is typified by a new ascending figure, of a straining, yearning character, with an alluring and beseeching close (XVII. a.).

XVII. Kundry's Sehnsüchtige (yearning) Motiv.

(*Das sehnsüchtige Motiv der Kundry.*)



(Accompaniment of the *Verführung*, temptation.)
(*Begleitung der Verführungsschilderung.*)



hold der Huldin Nah'n!
Love's de-lights re-pel!

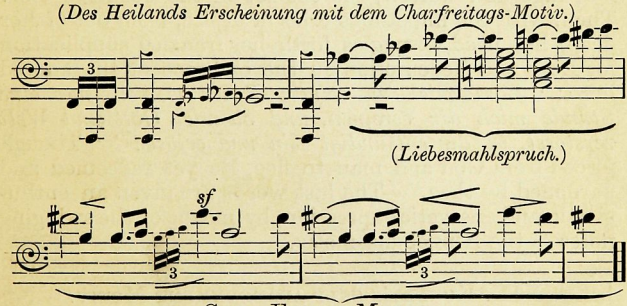
But Parsifal sees now in the "*Huldin*" (Queen) her who has ruined Amfortas; and this second half of his *Vision*, with its living musical picture of the temptations of her beauty, is accordingly saturated with the **Kundry-motiv**, which now weds itself to all the fine nuances of the picture of temptation, in many coloured variations (XVII. b.). An energetic ascending variation of this group, completing the picture with a terrible kiss, passes into the **Wehelaute** *f*, from which it then tears itself free and rushes aloft in its own hasty flight: "*Verderberin!—weiche von mir!*" "Pernicious one! get thee from me!" and then, as tho' thrust down, sinks to

the words, "*Ewig—ewig—von mir!*" "leave me—leave me—pray."

With impetuous energy the new **Yearning-motiv** of Kundry (XVII. a.) enters once more, and surrounds, with its imperious demand for love, the first completed form of an earlier suggested melody of unrestrained and enthusiastic **self-abandonment** (*Hingebung* XIX.): "*so fühle jetzt auch die meinen, ... O—kenntest du den Fluch,*" "Then feel now my desolation, ... could'st thou know the curse." What other than the **Kundry-motiv**, the savage enunciation of this curse, could it be that here marks with its theme the transition to her recital of its history? Then follows a solemn, distressful pause, and a short muffled roll of the kettledrums in the bass, accompanied by a mysterious cry of pain, which expresses in sighing, triplet phrases, the mourning of a world, the darkness of Good-Friday; and this prepares the way for the narration of the scene of the **Saviour bearing the cross** (XVIII.).

XVIII. The Saviour's appearance; and the Good-Friday-Motiv.

(*Des Heilands Erscheinung mit dem Charfreitags-Motiv.*)



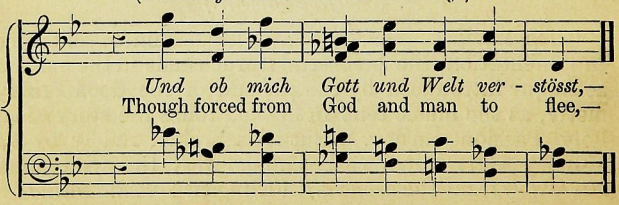
Good-Friday-Motiv.
(*Charfreitagsmotiv.*)

"*Ich sah Ihn—Ihn,*" "I saw Him—Him"—as though in lamentation, the **Liebesmahlspruch** ends in the **Schmerzensfigur** introduced by the rhythm of the **Good-Friday-motiv**, as the music tells in hushed tones the story of the holy Passion-journey. But it is broken rudely by the **Kundry-motiv** which rushes aloft with the wild phrase borrowed from the scene with Klingsor: "*und lachte!* . .

Da traf mich sein Blick," "and mocked Him—I caught then His glance"—and out of the long-drawn **Wehelaute** is unfolded the **Heilandsklage** (XIV.), breathing out an indescribable ecstasy of holy sorrow. Thus does the anguish of God look down on the sinful world. A rapid **Sorcery**-passage, striving upwards in the midst of her memory of divine suffering, hurls the curst woman down to the wanderings forced upon her by the curse: "*nun such' ich ihn von Welt zu Welt,*" "I seek Him now from world to world," while the **Heilandsklage** is developed in an ever-rising passage of endless desire. This dies away in echoing syncopes; but from them rises the wonderful mystery of the **Gral-harmonies**, in the religious notes of its ascending motiv; the wretched woman believes she sees again her Saviour, "*den Blick schon auf mich ruh'n,*" "His glance resting on me."—The sacred peace of this moment, so beautifully expressed even in the monotone of the low notes given to the voice, is, however, torn asunder by the laughter of the **Kundry-motiv**, which now storms forth till the close of her speech, lashed at last into wildest fury by the **Klingsor-motiv** in the bass. "*Nur schreien, wüthen, toben, rasen,*" "But only shriek and rage and wallow," is the lot of the accurséd one! Then, with the impetuous cries of desire, from out of her deep, hot need, struggles forth her frenzied supplication for Love and Redemption in the embrace of the adored hero: "*Lass' mich an seinem Busen weinen, nur eine Stunde mich dir vereinen, und ob mich Gott und Welt verstösst, in dir entsündigt sein und erlöst!*" "Though forced from God and man to flee, Be yet redeemed and pardoned by thee."—The last words are given an enthusiastic and energetic expression, by means of the swinging notes of the **Hingebung**-motiv.

XIX. Kundry's self-abandonment Motiv.

(*Das hingebende Motiv der Kundry.*)



Parsifal's answer: "*In Ewigkeit wärst du verdammt mit mir,*" "Eternally should I be damned with thee," is introduced by the same theme that introduced Kundry's great preceding song (XVII.); his following words: "*für eine Stunde Vergessens meiner Sendung,*" "if for one hour I forgot my holy mission," bring forward the lofty **Thoren-motiv** (V.), as a symbol of the noblest healing power. His answer then takes on the form of a fully conscious, yet passionately-expressed, warning which appears to transfigure his whole individuality—and in this it lifts up both the text and the music to a height which distinguishes it from all other works. Here stands the "*Wissende Thor*" (the fool enlightened by wisdom) before us, the pure one, in his office of the mighty teacher of true salvation. In correspondence with this development, the character of his majestically simple recitation approaches the lofty declamatory style in which, as before in "Tannhäuser," religious elevation, as the eternal might of Belief, finds its own appropriate tongue. But the **Wehelaute** of Amfortas soon press forward once more, as the hero recalls the sufferings of the holy brotherhood in their dire need of atonement; and thus the passionate **Kundry-motiv** forces its entrance ("*den Leib ertödten,*" "their lives tormented"). The **Gral-theme** now makes its appearance, with marvellous effect, in the vocal music: "*Doch wer erkennt ihm klar und hell, des einzigen Heiles wahren Quell!*" "But who with certain clearness knows the source whence true salvation flows?" Indeed this passage is of such an extraordinarily mystical significance, especially in the melody given to the voice, that it could only have sprung from the divine sphere of the **Gral**, in this tragedy of the "Salvation of the Saviour." With Parsifal's last cry, "*O Elend, aller Rettung Flucht,*" "Oh mis'ry! what a curse is this!" the **Wehelaute** and the **Kundry-motiv** close this reply called forth by Kundry's narration of her sufferings, and illuminated by the light of the manifestation of the Saviour, which shines out from the words of warning of the hero—now for the first time in very truth the *Hero* of this drama.

The last grand dramatic climax of the scene is developed by a succession of hastily interchanged sentences, in which the declamatory passages of music sung by Kundry, with their broad, daring intervals ("*lässt dich nun Gottheit erlangen—schuf dich zum Gott die Stunde,*"

"'Twould then a God surely make thee—stand as a God revealed"), reach the highest pitch of energy of supernatural passion. Kundry, in this last outburst of despairing infatuation and mad desire, takes the **alluring-figure** (XV. 4.) into the service of her song, in protracted intensity ("*Mein volles Liebesumfangen,*" "If in my arms I might take thee"), and then the **Maidens' cry**, as though a symbol of her burning for his embraces ("*Lass' mich dich Göttlichen lieben,*" "Let me, divine one, but love thee"); while Parsifal, solemnly and resolutely opposes each assault with a remarkable and powerful union of his **Parsifal-motiv** and the ascending passage of the **Gral-motiv.** There now remains for the sinning woman no other resource but her curséd companion, the terrible, hunted laughter of the **Kundry-motiv,** which storms through the last outpouring of her scorn of the "*Verfallenen, unseligen, schmachlüsternen*"—Amfortas, and lends even to her speech ("*den ich verlachte—lachte—lachte,*" "whom I have laughed at—laughed at—laughed at"), its frightful and drastic expression of devilment unchained. The **Spear-motiv** (I. 1. b.) forces its passage, in threefold ascent, through the shrill, mocking harmonies, and clears a space for Parsifal's hasty question: "*Wer durft' ihn verwunden mit heiliger Wehr?*" "Who dared raise against him the holy spear?"—Then the **Stürmische-figur** (Galloping-motiv, VI.) with a wild spring, rushes up into a passionate development of the symmetrically descending, chromatic motiv of the **Mädchenklage** (XV. 1.): "*Ha, Wahnsinn—Mitleid mit mir!*" "Ha! madness! Pity! Pity me" — which closes with a refrain from the **Hingebungs-melodie** (XIX.), with the ascending passage of **Sehnsucht** (XVII. a.) at its last, dragging end: "*Nur, eine Stunde mein—nur eine Stunde dein!*" "One single hour with me," etc. The final, despairing words of this speech are now uttered without any accompaniment, in broken phrases;—then follows Parsifal's second and horrified casting from him of the "*unseliges Weib*" ("detestable wretch").

A raging descent of the **Kundry-motiv** leads on to a hurried, syncopated repetition of the chromatic **mädchenklage**, ("*Wehrt ihm die Wege, wehrt ihm die Pfade,*" "Ward all the ways there, ward ev'ry passage"), followed on its part by the wild upward rush of the **stürmische figur** (VI.) which is employed also in the vocal music of

this most characteristic speech, "*Und flöhest du von hier, und fändest alle Wege der Welt!*" "For fled'st thou from hence, and foundest all the ways of the world." As this breaks off in the height of the scale, as though in the despair of search for the holy symbol ("*dess Pfade sollst du nicht finden,*" "That pathway ne'er shalt thou pass through"), the **Sorcery-motiv** at once presses upwards in excited motion, and the threatening growls of the **Klingsor-motiv** are heard beneath the sharp, cutting accents of the Curse, "*Irre! Irre!*" "Wander, wander" —given in short **Wehelauten**:—"*mir so vertraut!*" "Thou whom I trust!"—and then a final phrase of wild, broken tones, "*Dich weih' ich ihm zum Geleit!*" "Thee will I give as his guide."

Klingsor has now appeared on the ramparts, with a demoniacal combination of his own and the **Spear-motiv,** as he hurls the desecrated weapon at Parsifal. But a ray of brilliant sunlight breaks through the threatening storm-clouds as the **Gral-motiv** ascends, with all the splendour of a knightly song of triumph borne on the winds of heaven; with the token of the cross, the guileless fool, of the power of his compassion-won knowledge, razes to the ground the whole edifice of sorcery, while the **Klingsor** and **Klage-motivs** rush down *ff* amid the ruin and the wreck. Like faded flowers the maidens fall to earth, and, after the storm of the catastrophe has breathed itself out in the diabolical interval of the "diminished fifth," the **Mädchenklage** (XVI. 1.) sighs out twice over a soft phrase of mournful melody. Then, with Kundry's last glance at the departing hero, there rises from the **Wehelaute**, and with painful energy, a **Sehnsucht-cry** (XVII. a.) striving for heaven, but languishing and dying away. Parsifal turns his steps away, and the curtain falls, with a deep re-echoing tremolo of hurried B-minor chords.

THE THIRD ACT.

—o—

THE PRELUDE.

With the very first tones we enter upon the oppressive, melancholy sphere of the **Verödung** (Wilderness, XX.). As though in constant search, and in utter disillusionment, these tones give the principal theme of the whole first half of the Act, and in their development resounds an echo of the mourning-music which we shall hear later in the funeral procession of **Titurel.**

XX. THEME OF THE WILDERNESS.

(*Das Thema der Öde.*)

pp

(FUNERAL-MUSIC.)

(*Trauermusik.*)

etc.

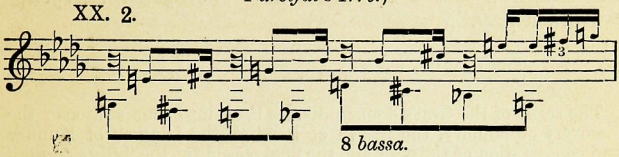
From this is soon spun out a more rapid measure, but no less mournful, agonised and hopeless: a picture of the **Wanderings** of Parsifal (XX. 2.). This halting variation of the **Stormy figure** of the **Ritt-motiv** (VI.), with its

broken syncopes, is ever fruitlessly struggling to ascend; while the chromatic descending movement of its bass, in contrary motion, employed thematically in the very commencement of the prelude, accompanies it continually to the end.

PARSIFAL'S WANDERING MOTIV.

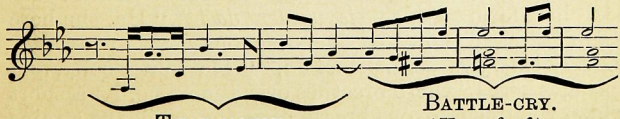
Parsifal's Irre.)

XX. 2.



After a short pause on the **Öde**-theme, as though in a despairing glance around, the **Wandering**-theme presses upwards, in altered rhythm, louder and with heavier tread, and we fancy that we catch a glimpse of the form of the **Gral-motiv** in its hasty crescendo; but **Kundry's curse**, breaking out *ff*, and rushing down through three octaves with its chasing demisemiquavers, hurls the unhappy wanderer once more from the fancied vision of the sacred goal, and casts him into the depths of the need and strife of the world.

This is portrayed in the following portion of the prelude; the **Spear-motiv** of the **Liebesmahlspruch**—which even during the course of the Kundry-motiv had arisen on high as a holy weapon against all woe, and as a mighty call for courage in despair—now appears in intimate union with the short strokes of the **Thor-motiv.** Thus the pure guardian of the holy weapon, not daring to desecrate it by using it in warfare, fights against the ceaseless assaults of a world at enmity with all that is good and noble. In all the turmoil it sounds as a battle-cry, or rather as a cry of yearning for atonement of this suffering, valiant even in the despair of the strife, and in its restless-moving measure it rises a second time to *ff*.



THOR-MOTIV. (*Thorenmotiv.*)

BATTLE-CRY. (*Kampfruf.*)

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Here the accompaniment passes once, in hurried change, into the form of the **Klingsor-motiv**; and now the **Thor-motiv** dies away in the deep rolling of the kettle-drums, while the **Öde**-theme passes over into the sighs of the **Mädchen-klage** (XV. 1.), as the curtain is parted. We are now on the Gral's domain, and Kundry's sigh calls the grey-haired Gurnemanz from his hermit's hut forth into the "*heiligsten Morgen,*" "Holiest day."

I.

The scene of the Gral's domain divides itself into four sections: the discovery of Kundry, the return of Parsifal, the baptism of Kundry and consecration of the hero, and the final episode of the "*Blumenaue*" or "*Charfreitagszauber*" (Flowering meadows, or Good-Friday's charm). The spirit of Good-Friday breathes through them all; but, as through the thick clouds that veil a festival-morn, the presage of the speedy victory of the sun's rays increases gradually to the full assurance of the conquering light, so is it here. The **Öde** Theme which overmasters a great part of the scene with its melody, both in voice and accompaniment, departs at last, as Nature blossoms out in full release from sin, and the tears of the repentant woman proclaim the Redemption in the holy dew of the Easter-mystery.

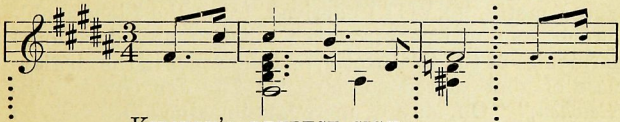
It is the **Sorcery**-motiv which accompanies the first sighs of the still concealed and long-lost woman, and **Klingsor's-motiv** seems still to threaten her with its might ("*So jammervoll klagt kein Wild,*" "no animal grieves like that"); but, with the first mention of the "*heiligsten Morgens*" (holiest day), there follows, as from the woman's soul, a short, delicate phrase of melody from the later **Entsühnungsgesange** (atonement-song, XXI. 1.), which, however, is hushed by her "*deepest sigh*" (XXI. 1. a.) as it struggles, in painful yearning, from the ban of **Sorcery**.—The hasty movements of Gurnemanz as he strides to the thicket, and tears asunder the boughs from behind which the cry of pain proceeded, are illustrated by a short orchestral passage of quick, rising, drastic phrases which pass into a hurried abbreviation of the **Hingebung**-motiv (XIX.), as he removes the last branches that conceal her form: "*Ha—sie wieder da!*" "Ha, she here again?" And now, as he summons her to awake: "*Der Winter floh, der Lenz ist da,*" "The winter's fled and spring is here!" there breathes over the scene, for a short while, the fresh, joyous breeze of spring, while the strains of Redemption sound forth in the character of the later

Atonement-melodies. Once more this life comes to a grieving halt, as he finds that the new-found woman is "*Kalt und starr—wie todt,*" "cold and stiff—she's dead"; and he bestirs himself to arouse her, while his movements are again illustrated by a short orchestral passage, ushered in by a gentle phrase which seems to be a long-pent **sigh of yearning for atonement** (XXI. 1. b.). But every endeavour for redemption is still weighed down by the **Öde-theme**, which lifts its comfortless voice in every phrase of the accompaniment.

At last, in correspondence with the opening of the scene, there sounds in dragging tones,—as the first breath of Kundry awaking from the sleep of death,—the **Mädchenklage**, which gives place to the **Gral-motiv**, ascending on the spring-breeze. A convulsive sob of the **Kundry-motiv**, *ff*,—a wailing cry—and the care of the pious hermit is rewarded by Kundry's resuscitation; she has woken from her eternal, curséd wanderings, to Spring and to Redemption.

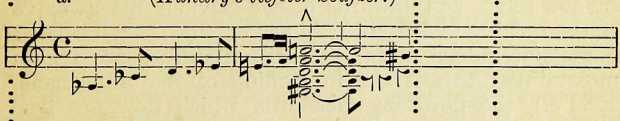
THE FIRST ATONEMENT MELODY.

XXI. 1. (*Die erste Entsühnungsmelodie.*)



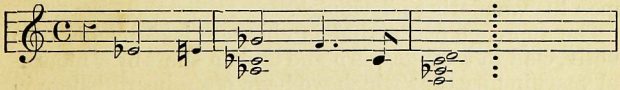
KUNDRY'S DEEPEST SIGH.

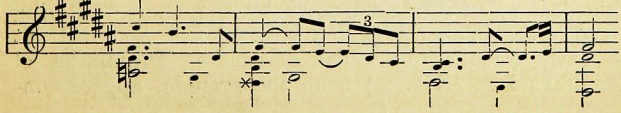
a. (*Kundry's tiefster Seufzer.*)



YEARNING SIGH FOR ATONEMENT.

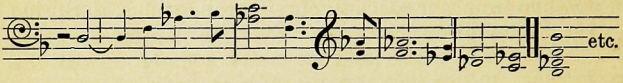
b. (*Sehnsuchtsseufzer n. d. Entsühnung.*)





As she rises, and takes the first steps that she has set on the Gral's domain since last we saw her, we hear again the thematic succession of notes and chords which marked her first entry in the drama; but to this is now wedded a short figure in triplets in the bass, portraying the awe and wonder of Gurnemanz at the complete change that has passed over her nature. In very truth she is now the "helping one," the "ministering one," and her solitary words in this whole Act: "*Dienen—dienen,*" "Service—service!" complete this wonderful picture that mirrors the purest moment of her former life. Thus she passes into the hut to fetch the ewer for filling at the well, and Gurnemanz watches her gait in wonder: "*Wie anders schreitet sie als sonst!*" "How unlike this her step of yore!"

(*Gralmotiv.*)



We have already entered upon the charm of **Good-Friday,** whose motiv, (XVIII.) derived from the Liebesmahl-spruch, soon whispers from the religious and devotional harmonies of the **Gral-motiv,** and then ends in the **elegiac-close** of that sacred speech ("*O Tag der Gnade ohne Gleichen,*" "Oh, day of mercy unimagined"). But no End is typified thereby; the rather, there is developed in soft low tones, as the words of the Saviour die away, a gentle, rocking melody breathing out the peaceful spirit of the miraculous morn, yet still timidly searching in uncertainty: this is the foreboding of the **Blumenaue,** (XXIV.), the flowering meadows, which now are trod with flagging, dreamy steps, by a new guest of the Gral,—a guest unlooked for though deeply yearned—Parsifal upon his wandering pilgrimage.

The approach of **Parsifal** is characterised by his own motiv, clad in a minor garb and broken short by a mournful yearning passage which we have often heard before in this drama, and dragged down by the short, faltering tread of the **Ode-motiv** which now follows, and will not so early forsake him. The descending chromatics of **Parsifal's Irre** (XX. 2.) from the prelude, appear constantly between these themes.

Gurnemanz now teaches the silent, mournful guest the holiness of the day, on which it is not becoming to enter armed the consecrated place; and in his pious warning the devout and solemn harmonies of the **Gral** are heard, accompanied by the wailing **Good-Friday-motiv** (XVIII.). —Parsifal puts off his armour, plants the holy spear in the ground, and kneels before it in silent prayer. Gurnemanz recognises him again, recognises the spear, and breaks at last from fearsome wonder into a fervent cry of thanksgiving.

Meanwhile the prayer of Parsifal, introduced by his own muffled motiv united to the low, drawn-out tones of the **Spear**-motiv, is accompanied throughout by the hallowed strains of the **Liebesmahlspruch**, as though enshrouded in the tremulous harmonies of a sacred mystery. From this phrase a figure of inward rapture is developed, in descending chromatics ("*Ha, welche Pfade fand er!*"): this is the middle-voice of the "Promise" transposed into the upper voice, while its **Thor-motiv** sounds out at the same time, and in this new association, with a suggestion of the **Atonement-melody**, gives new, joyful life to the crescendo cadence of the **Liebesmahlspruch**, as though in an outpouring of the loftiest emotions of the soul: "*O heiligster Tag, zu dem ich heut' erwachen sollt'!*" "Oh!—holiest day, To which my happy soul awakes!" With the **Heilandsklage** (XIV.), now employed *ff* as a song full of hope in the power of Redemption, we reach again the **Gral-motiv**, *dim.*, as Parsifal now rises from his knees and greets the grey-beard in the even-flowing phrase: "*Heil mir, dass ich dich wiederfinde,*" "Thank Heaven that I again have found thee." These simple words gain a beautiful and appropriate setting in the ritual-like refrain of the motiv. But after Gurnemanz's joyous reply, there follows the **Öde-motiv** of the beginning of the prelude, developed by a short figure which proclaims itself as a rhythmical abbreviation of that motiv, and is employed later as the principal motiv of Gurnemanz's narration of the sufferings of the Knights of the Gral (XX. 1.).

Before this narration, however, Parsifal takes up his own recital, introduced by this motiv ("*Der Irrniss und der Leiden Pfade kam ich,*" "Through error and through suff'ring lay my pathway"), and paints the picture of his wanderings, already portrayed in the music of the Prelude, in the mournful tones of personal experience. Thus

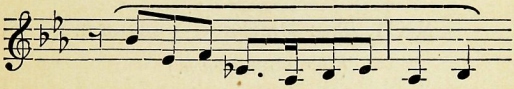
we hear once more the same musical forms in the motivs. After the first steps of the syncopated **Irre-motiv** (XX. 2. Wandering astray), the **Melody of the forest** (VIII.) is heard and reminds us involuntarily of its inner relationship with the musical spirit of the **Atonement-melodies** and the **Blumenaue**. Then, with the passionate outcry: "*Zu ihm, dess tiefe Klagen ich thörig staunend einst vernahm,*" "To him, whose dire complainings Once came to me an awestruck Fool," the **Suffering-motiv** of Amfortas (IV.) breaks forth in the bass and is followed by the **Thor-motiv**, in longer development. To the words: "*Doch ach, den Weg des Heiles nie zu finden,*" "But ah!—the wished for path for aye denied me," the **Irre-motiv** wanders and staggers once more as in the Prelude, till it reaches the despairing foreboding of the **Gral-motiv**: "*wähnt' ich ihn recht schon erkannt—da musste Verzweiflung mich fassen;*" "Well though I knew it, methought. Then hopeless despair overtook me." With the picture of the attacks upon the holy weapon, the second portion of the Prelude is also repeated; the **Thor-Motiv** deals out its valiant strokes, and the musical commotion reaches a fresh pitch of energy in the final triumphant onset of the **Gral-motiv**, which now mounts aloft in all the brilliance of its recovered freedom: "*der dort dir schimmert heil und hehr—des Grales heil'gen Speer!*" "'Tis this that gleaming hails thee here—The Gral's most Holy Spear!"

The **Liebesmahlspruch** is now heard, with the subsidiary phrase of the **Good-Friday-Motiv**, as Gurnemanz, in the deep emotion of joy, cries out: "*O Gnade, höchstes Heil,*" "Oh Glory! Bounteous bliss!" with the last words of which cry: "*heilig hehrstes Wunder*" "Beauteous, boundless marvel!" in the **Elegiac cadence** which seems to dissolve his delight into tears, the long silent **Belief-theme** proclaims from above the divine healing of all woe and, in gentle tones, leads over to the beginning of Gurnemanz's recital: "*O Herr, war es ein Fluch—so glaub', er ist gewichen.*" "Great Knight! If 'twere a curse . . . . . Be sure it has departed."—But with this peaceful development the Belief-theme has become transformed into a melody which we fancy we have already heard as a fresh upper "voice" to the Thor-motiv, in Gurnenmanz's earlier cry of joy, and which now singing of purification and atonement, in pious emotion, leads

once more into the **Gral-motiv** (" *Hier bist du, dies des Grals Gebiet.*" "Here art thou, in the Gral's domain.") The description of the desertion and mourning of the Gral-temple brings forward again the beginning of the Prelude; then the narration of Amfortas' passionate cravings for death calls forth his **Wehelaute** and the **Kundry-motiv,** whereafter, in the following, longer portion of the speech, devoted to representing the general situation of the knights, the already-mentioned **shortened figure of the Öde** (XX. 1.) is developed thematically in countless variation.

SHORTENED ÖDE-THEME.

XX. 1. (*Verkürztes Öde-Thema.*)



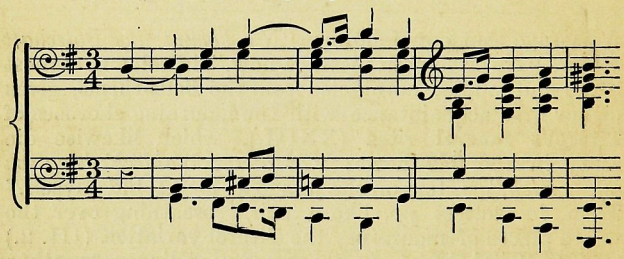
A passage that now follows: "*Nie kommt uns Botschaft mehr,*" "Ne'er cometh message now," in solemn, earnest tones and muffled harmonies from the **Bells-theme,** gives us our first acquaintance with the mourning choruses of **Titurel's funeral** rites (XXIII.), which likewise die away in the **Öde-theme:** "*In dieser Waldeck' barg ich selber mich,*" "Here on the woodside lone I hid myself." Then, in softest *pp*, like a spirit breathing over the waste places of mourning, the **Titurel-variation** (III. 2.) of the Belief-theme, in its peaceful radiance, breathes forth, ending in the **Gral-motiv**: "*Denn Titurel, mein heiliger Herr,*" For Titurel, my cherished chief,"—and finally, as the **Öde-motiv** is repeated for the last time, the speech closes with the halting, sobbing phrase: "*Er starb—ein Mensch—wie Alle!*" "Expired—a man like others."

A loud cry of anguish breaks from Parsifal's breast: "*Und ich—ich bin's, der all' dies Elend schuf!*" "And I—I 'tis, who all this woe have wrought!" Lamenting sounds of **Sehnsucht** (desire) for Redemption ring through his speech; and then the **Thor-motiv** ("*zur Rettung selbst ich auserkoren,*" "I, who to save men was selected") sinks into powerless silence. Overpowered by passionate anguish, Parsifal swoons under

the load of sin of the world, which calls to him for atonement. Then Kundry hastens forward in help, takes water from the spring, and sprinkles his brows, unfastens his cuirass, and busies herself about him in soft, womanly good service—whereon the hasty, dashing motion of her **stormy figure** (VI.) appears, but soons quiets down to a subtle reminiscence of her **Self-abandonment**-motiv (XIX.), sounding out in two short, gentle phrases, typical of her subdued spirit and desire for salvation. All is silent for a moment: "*Nicht so!—Die heil'ge Quelle selbst erquicke uns'res Pilgers Bad,*" "not so—The holy fount itself Befitteth more our pilgrim's bath." Introduced by a few deep, long-drawn notes from the **Bell-motiv**, the new **Theme of Blessing and Baptism** (XXII.) mounts up in solemn, earnest harmonies.

XXII. The Blessing Versicle.

(*Der Segensspruch.*)

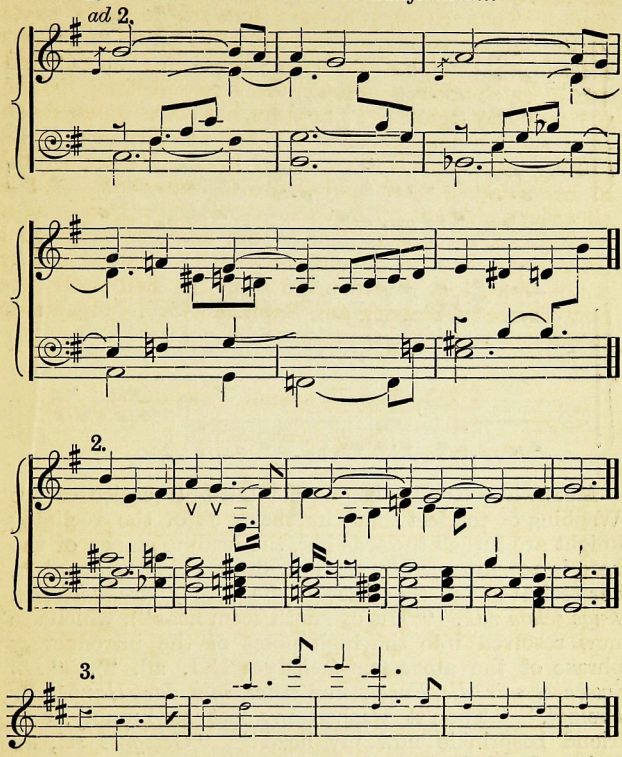


The following division of the scene is governed by this new motiv, which appears four times over, at short intervals, as an introduction to the characteristic incidents of the scene, the Washing of the feet, the Blessing, the Anointment of Parsifal and the Baptism of Kundry. In its peaceful and religious strains it unites in itself somewhat of the character of the Gral with the gentleness of Nature in its lovely springtide, which surrounds these pious rites in ever more clearly revealed significance, as the living symbol of Atonement and Rebirth.

The first Blessing is followed at once by the **Second Atonement-melody**, of which we have already heard a premonition. It is divided into two parts, whose gentle, peaceful strains sound before and after the beautiful words of Gurnemanz: "*und langer Irrfahrt Staub soll nun von ihm gewaschen sein.*" "So let his travel-stains be now completely washed away." (XXI. ad 2 + 2).

Second and Third Atonement Melodies.

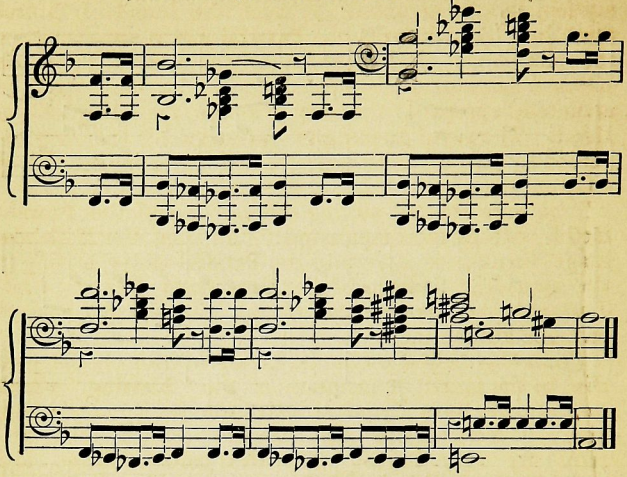
XXI. 2. *Zweite und dritte Eutsühnungsmelodie.*



The morning sun already shines brightly on the dewy flowers and on the souls of atoned mankind; yet the inmost joy of emancipation, the full light of the Easter-morn cannot be manifested, until the consecration of holy deeds of love has strengthened and purified the pious, hoping group for the last journey. *Unser harrt die hehre Burg,*" "the Court our coming waits"—again the solemn, warning tones of the **Funeral-chorus** (XXIII.) appear, and, in their recalling of the knights' preparation for the last sorrowful feast, there follows yet again in its abbreviated form the motiv of the **Desert** (XX. 1.).

XXIII. The Funeral Chorus.

(*Der Trauerchor.*)



Meanwhile Kundry begins her faithful service of the Washing of the feet; and as the eyes of the reclining knight are turned towards her, the healing glance of the hero is accompanied by the long-drawn chords heard in her recital in the second act (to the words, "*wähn ich sein Auge schon nah,*" "His eye doth seem near"), which are now resolved into the high notes of the introductory phrase of the **atonement-melody** (XXI. ad. 2). "*Du wuschest mir die Fusse, nun netze mir das Haupt der Freund,*" "Thou'st washed my feet so humbly, this friend besprinkle now my head!" "*Gesegnet sei, du Reiner, durch das Reine,*" "now blessed be, thou pure one, through pure water!" These words of Gurnemanz, in deep emotion, are sung in the motiv of the **Blessing** (XXII.), and are followed, as before, by the pure, clear melody of the atonement (XXI. 2.). "*So weiche jeder Schuld Bekummerniss von dir,*" "So may all care and sin be driven far from thee!" Accompanied by a flowing passage, the **Blessing** is then repeated for the third time, preluding the Anointment of the Feet by Kundry. Suggestions of the **Hingebung** and **Sehnsucht-motiv** whisper through the low music which accompanies this situation

and at last passes into the **Mädchenklage** ("*Du salbtest mir die Fusse—das Haupt nun salbe Titurel's Genoss,*" "now that my feet thou'st anointed, my head the friend of Titurel must lave") ; whereon the **Parsifal-motiv** appearing on the last word of the sentence, "*dass heute noch als König er mich grüsse,*" "for I to-day as king shall be anointed," prepares the way for the Anointing of the Head. The royal greeting of Gurnemanz is then accompanied by this motiv in a protracted development, full of spiritual meaning. "*Du Reiner, mitleidvoll Duldender,*" "Thou pure one, all-pitying sufferer" ; and the **Thorenmotiv**, with an accompanying figure from the **Heilandsklage**, turns once more into the **Parsifal-motiv**, ending in the ascending passage of the **Gral-motiv** *ff* ("*die letzte Last entnimm nun seinem Haupt,*" "assist his soul to cast one burden more").

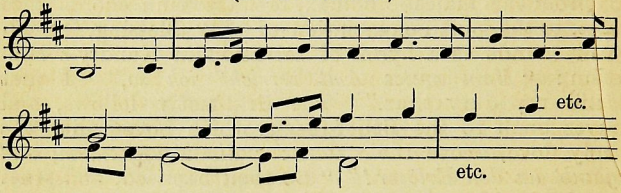
From this majestic climax, broad solemn chords pass *dim.* to the fourth enunciation of the "**Blessing**," which now sounds as a hymn of salvation in Kundry's baptism: "*Mein erstes Amt verricht' ich so,*" "I first fulfil my duty thus." The **Gral-motiv** follows, and gives birth to the **Belief-theme**, which hovers, like the holy dove, above the waters: "*die Taufe nimm, und glaub' an den Erlöser!*" "Be thou baptised, and trust in the Redeemer!" As this theme sinks softly down in the baptism, raining its blessing on the head of the sinner, bowed to earth in the passion of grief, it passes into the soul-stirring sounds of the close of the **Heilandsklage** (Act II.: "*da traf mich sein Blick,*" "I caught then His glance"); the glance of the Saviour looks down from the eyes of His guileless messenger, bringing atonement to the curse-freed, sobbing woman. The last obstacle is removed—in this moment of divine blessing, Redemption has at last manifested itself, as Light appeared in the world at the word of its Creator—and, from the last cries of the **Heilandsklage**, it soars gently forth in the waving strains of the "**Blumenaue**" (XXIV.).

The magic of the newly-wakened springtime is now completed, and in the delight of being, the sweetest sounds of Redemption's joy fill the scented, dewy meadows of the fair, flowering world in the sunshine of the Saviour's day. As Parsifal exclaims, "*Wie dünkt mich doch die Aue heut' so schön,*" "How fair the fields and meadows seem to-day," the melody is developed in

canonic fashion, and followed by the strains, at first yearning and distressed, and then calm and peaceful, of the **first atonement melody** (XX. 1.), which had already even at the beginning of the Act cast its rays of hope over the wilderness. Yet they must soon be hushed once more in the muffled sounds (" *Das ist Charfreitags-zauber, Herr,*" " That is Good-Friday's spell, my lord!") of the **Good-Friday-motiv,** introduced by the shuddering tremolo of the **Liebesmahlspruch,** which, after repeated sobs, (" *O weh des höchsten Schmerzentags,* " alas, that day of agony!") are cleared away in the continuation of Gurnemanz's speech: " *Du siehst, das ist nicht so,*" " Thou see'st, that is not so."

XXIV. The Flowering Meadows.

(*Die Blumenaue.*)



The **Blumenaue** has once more broken through the heavy clouds of the Good-Friday-motiv, and paints, with its canonic melody, the graceful background to Gurnemanz's exposition of the blessing of Good-Friday's spell. An interlude of symmetrical passages from the **Gral-motiv** (" *Nun freut sich alle Kreatur auf des Erlösers holder Spur,*" " all earthly creatures in delight at the Redeemer's trace so bright") leads on to the third appearance of the principal melody, this time in triumphant *forte* (" *will ihr Gebet ihm weihen,*" " uplift their pray'rs of duty.") Again, in contrast to this, the " appearance of the Saviour on the cross" is marked by oppressive rolling of the kettle-drums, on the 'diminished fifth' (" *Ihn selbst am Kreuze kann sie nicht erschauen,*" " To see Him on the Cross they have no power"); and, as though in yearning for the vision of the holy one, the final portion of the **Liebesmahlspruch** forces its way up, with successive ascending phrases of the **elegiac-figure,** until the **first Atonement melody** returns, developed in

manifold variety: "*Das merkt nun Halm und Blume auf den Auen,*" "and now perceives each blade and meadow-flower." A softly-swelling chromatic succession of notes ("*wie Gott mit himmlischer Geduld,*" "as the Lord in pity man did spare"), leads to the fourth entry of the principal melody. Once more the stream of melody overflows in a hovering *crescendo*, and at last the **Gral-motiv** rings through the "Blumenaue" with the joyous and complete triumph of Good, sounding in the final words: "*Da die entsündigte Natur heut' ihren Unschuldstag erwirbt,*" "That trespass-pardon'd Nature wakes now to her day of innocence."—Then, commencing *forte*, but gradually moderating its force, a joyful variation of the **atonement-melody** (XXI. 3.) appears, and, after a lengthy development, passes into the first form of the melody, to end in the yearning tones of the **Mädchen-klage**: "*Ich sah sie welken, die einst mir lachten,*" "I saw my scornful mockers wither." With the following words: "*ob heut' sie nach Erlösung schmachten?*" "Now look they for forgiveness hither?"—the **Heilandsklage** sounds softly again, and then gives place to the fifth and last entry of the principal melody of the **Blumenaue**, *pp*, as there are woven into the melody the joyous words: "*Auch deine Thräne ward zum Segenthaue: du weinest—sieh', es lacht die Aue!*" "Like a sweet dew a tear from thee too floweth: Thou weepest—see! the landscape gloweth."

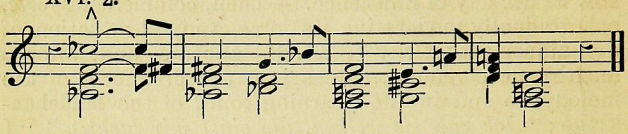
Then sighs of holy rapture swell forth, in the echoes of the **last atonement-melody**, and die away again, *dim.* Cries of grief (**Wehelaute**) are sounding in these dying tones; distant bells, robbed of the final note of their earlier theme, forebode the funeral rites which are preparing in the castle of the Gral, and their theme is united to the figure that constantly accompanies the following music of the "moving panorama" and of the funeral-choirs (see XXIII.). But now the solemn, heavy sounds are conquered by the brilliance of the **Parsifal-motiv** which accompanies the commencement of the hero's journey to the house of mourning, in which he is to fulfil his deed of healing. Thus, firm of tread, we pass with him into the dim marvels of the new changing scene.

THE VERWANDLUNGSMUSIK.

(Music of the moving panorama.)

The eternal march of the **figure of accompaniment** (XXIII.) holds the whole music in its thraldom; and in its midst, like the heavy strokes of Fate, there falls, with piercing woe, the full form of the **Second Herzeleide-motiv**,—the expression of the Heart's-affliction and **Love's-Woe** of Mankind, and of all the torture of the Love of their Redeemer!—

XVI. 2.

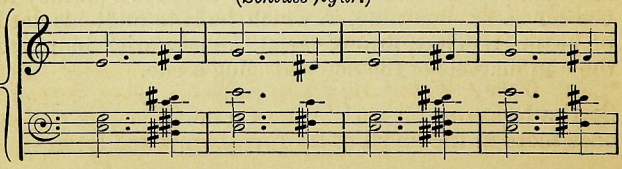


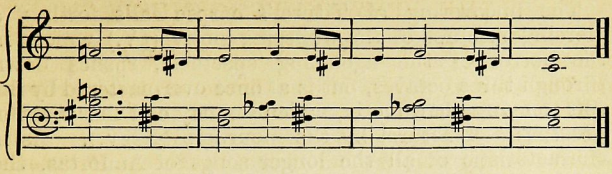
It is as though there passed before us the picture of the life of our hero, from the sufferings of his mother's love onward to his passion-journey, with the down-weighing cross of his redeemer-office. Once more, on this last journey, he must bear in compassion the whole weight of Evil which weighs down the world to whose salvation he is summoned. We enter on a sphere of deepest anguish, announced to us in Gurnemanz's recital, through which we press forward, as the motiv moves ahead, in terror, finding no loophole of freedom; constantly exposed to fresh blows of Fate, which heap themselves together in the harmonies of the **Öde-theme**, with painful, fallacious hopes of escape, the **accompaniment-figure** mercilessly winds on, till at last the tones of the **Bells** take part in the music and usher in the complete development of the mournful, anguished **cadence-figure** of this interlude. (XXIII. 2.).

XXIII. 2.

CADENCE-FIGURE OF THE INTERLUDE.

(Schluss figur.)





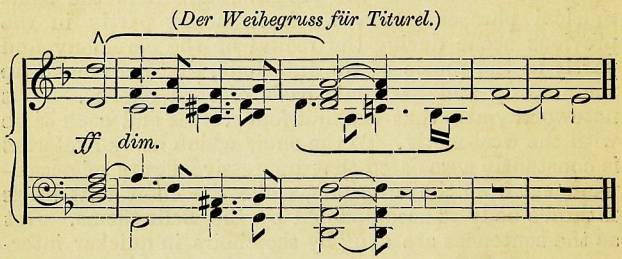
As the earlier **accompaniment-figure**, hushed for a moment, enters afresh, and the **Öde-motiv** sounds out in its full form, the Gral-Temple opens before our eyes, and the knights, some bearing the corpse of Titurel, the others bearing Amfortas and the Gral, march in from opposite aisles, clad in mourning garb and singing the antiphones of their double-chorus.

II.

The spell of deep mourning and woeful despair lies still upon the choruses of the Knights, and it is the same musical phrases which we have heard partly in the previous scene during the recital of the ceremony and partly in the music of the Interlude, that here make up the melody and harmonic basis of each chorus. It is noteworthy also that the first four verses end each time with the **Gral-motiv**. To the choir which bears Amfortas is constantly associated that oppressive **figure of accompaniment** from the Interlude, while the choir that bears Titurel's body is accompanied by the **Bells-theme**. But as the sentences are sung by the choirs in quicker interchange, and the mourning waxes in emotion, the first figure gains the mastery, with agonised cries of grief in the **Öde-motiv**; and at the close, as all unite in passionate repetition of the lamenting shout "*Zum letzten mal!*" "Thy duty to all," the struggling, down-treading **Schlussfigur** (cadence) of the Interlude (XXIII. 2.), built on the melody of the beginning of the prelude, gives its wailing, tortured expression to the cry. Then the Bells ring out their peal, aud only cease upon Amfortas' wearied sighs "*Ja, Wehe! Wehe! Weh' über mich!*" "Aye, Sorrow! Sorrow! Sorrow for me!" whereon the **Öde-motiv** sounds once more in the midst of its own abbreviated form.

The uncovering of Titurel's corpse calls forth *ff* a piercing outburst of the **Suffering-motiv** (IV.) which, in the horror of the agonising spectacle, rushes down through three octaves, but is at once overmastered by the soft tones of a new motiv, which we may call the "**Solemn greeting**" of Titurel by the mourners (XXV.). As is characteristic of all the longer songs of Amfortas, the motiv forms first a short "*Ritornell*" to his prayer ("*Mein Vater, Hochgesegneter der Helden!*" "My Father, highest venerated hero!"), before it is taken up to form the ground-theme of the prayer itself. It breathes forth all the noble repose of the lofty reign of Titurel, and when at last, with the words: "*Oh, der du jetzt in göttlichem Glanz den Erlöser selbst erschaust,*" "Oh! thou who now in heavenly heights dost behold the Saviour's self," it is resolved into the **Belief-theme**, we fancy we detect an inner relationship of these two themes, though it cannot be demonstrated in form.

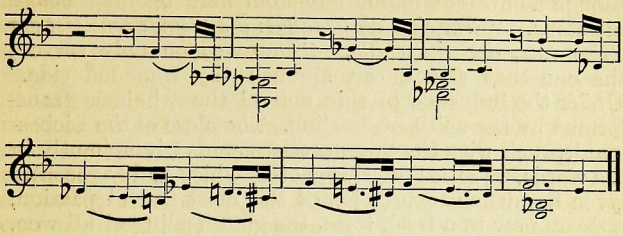
XXV. Solemn Greeting of Titurel.



The prayer then passes on to the recollection of the unveiling of the Gral, and the **Liebesmahlspruch** and **Gral-motiv** once more make their entry; but, with the last phrase: "*Tod—Sterben—einzige Gnade!*" "Death—darkness! solit'ry mercy!" we encounter a fresh musical figure which appears to present an involuntary resemblance to the second Herzeleide-motiv, as a motiv of Love's suffering, but which here accompanies the last heart-felt, weeping words of Amfortas, as an independent phrase, first in the soft tones of emotion and then in the hurried accents of lamentation.

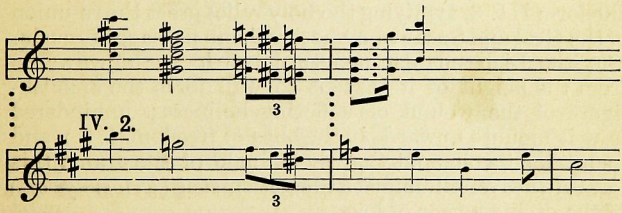
AMFORTAS' PRAYER.

XVI. 3. (*Gebet des Amfortas.*)



But the quick, rising, threatening cries of the knights: "*Walte des Amtes! Du musst! Du musst!*" "Do now thine office—thou must, thou must!" rouse the weary king to a fresh pitch of despair: "*Nein—nicht mehr,*" "No—no more," and it is the **Suffering-motiv**, which accompanied him at the beginning of the drama, that now, at its close, associates itself, in tumultuous passion, with a defiant, ascending development, of the utmost energy—to the terrible revolt of his soul against Life itself.

IV. 1.

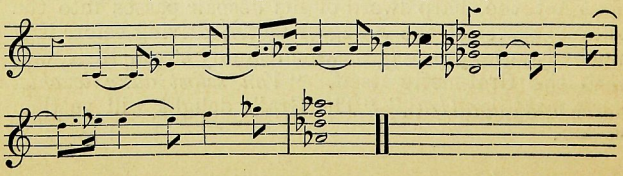


With his last words ("*Heraus die Waffe,*" "take up your weapons"), as in the corresponding situation in the first Act, the sharp sword of his despair passes into the satanic power of the **Klingsor-motiv**, driving before it a flock of **Sorcery** passages, which finally storm their way into the **Gral-motiv** itself. "*Von selbst dann leuchtet euch wohl der Gral,*" "The Gral's delight will ye then regain."

Parsifal, the new king of the Gral, has already entered, bearing the healing weapon, and the harmonies of the **Gral-motiv** are modulated in a wonderful fashion, as though a new and higher kingdom were opening before his steps. "*Nur eine Waffe taugt: die Wunde schliesst der Speer nur, der sie schlug,*" "One weapon only serves; the one that struck can staunch thy wounded side." Under the influence of this marvel the whole is transformed by the spirit of Healing. The close of the Liebesmahlspruch with the **Spear-motiv** sounds triumphantly in the words, and the **Suffering-motiv**, which had so recently given the defiant expression of the most fearful passion, appears now in a fresh form, the glad healing of all woe, as the bleeding wound of the king closes under the touch of Parsifal's spear (IV. 2.). "*Gesegnet sei dein Leiden, das Mitleids höchste Kraft und reinstes Wissens Macht dem zagen Thoren gab!*" "Oh, blessed be thy sorrows, for pity's potent might, and knowledge' purest power, they taught a timid fool." Following on this variation of the **Suffering-Motiv**, the **Thoren-Motiv** enters as a lofty symbol of the victory of purity, swelling ever louder until the song of triumph is crowned by the **Parsifal-Motiv** which now appears in full kingly majesty as Parsifal strides to the centre of the stage: "*Den heil'gen Speer—ich bring ihn euch zurück!*" "The Holy Spear once more behold in this." The **Liebesmahlspruch** and the **Belief-theme** (in the form III. 3, typifying the holy relic) greet the re-union of the Gral and Spear in a short, solemn passage of music. But the Liebesmahlspruch turns no longer downwards from the height of its ascent to wail forth the anguish-figure of the wound of suffering holiness; unhindered now it mounts upwards in the bliss of freedom (I. 3.), and maintains throughout the whole finale of the drama this form of a heaven-illumined **Redemption-song** (*Erlösungwort*) of the divine power of love.

Love-Feast Theme as the Song of Redemption.

I. 3. (*Liebesmahlspruch als Erlösungswort.*)



And now, accompanied by the **Belief-theme** (III. 3.), the last joyous, sacred song of the new king begins: "*O welchen Wunders höchstes Glück!*" "Oh mighty miracle of bliss!" whereon, as at the end of the prelude, the fervent, ascending **Spear-motiv**, the **Elegiac figure**, and the **Heilandsklage** itself, are filled with the spirit of the healing of all woe in this highest ecstasy of the soul. The **Thorenmotiv** and the **Erlösungswort** now take up the refrain, as Parsifal mounts the steps of the altar and utters his first, resounding royal command and with it his last words: "*Enthüllet den Gral! Öffnet den Schrein!*" "Disclose the Gral! open the shrine!"

In golden waves of harp-sounds, the **Gral-motiv** proclaims the unveiling of the long-hidden vessel of blessing, and it is followed, in Parsifal's silent prayer, by the close-united pair of sacred motivs, the **Erlösungswort** and the **Belief-theme**, the one appearing to be the sun-steeped flower of the heavenly love of the other. A flood of brilliant light streams from above on the dim twilight of the hall: "*Höchsten Heiles wunder,*" "wondrous work of mercy!" sings softly the choir, in the motiv of the **Thor**, which here reveals itself as the true motiv of the Saviour. "**Erlösung dem Erlöser,**" "Salvation to the Saviour!" sounds forth the **Erlösungswort** from the depth of the men's voices, rising through the choir of the youths to reach the voices of the children, who carry it above the voices of the worshippers until it reaches the highest height, and there in long-sustained sounds it rains down the eternal rays of the Sun of Healing. The **Belief-Theme**, in many-voiced enrichment, sinks down from above as though on the soft wings of spirits of the light, swaying in the air in harmonious measures, and ever-changing interlacement. The Holy Dove hovers in blessing over the head of Parsifal, who softly wafts the Gral before the up-turned gaze of the knights; Kundry sinks to the ground, her soul released from the body, under the spell of mystic harmonies; and as the **Gral-motiv** sounds out with solemn splendour, in homage to the new-found king, it seems to open up fresh, higher, purer spheres of divine marvel, through which again the quivering radiance of the **Belief-theme** streams forth its wondrous light. Thus a flood of unearthly bliss covers the visible manifestation of this lofty mystery, as it fades

before our eyes in the mist of a heavenly Ether, through which once more sounds majestically, from out the last Gral-motiv, the divine **Redemption-Song** as it mounts in freedom to realms of eternal joy.

FINIS.

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LONDON BRANCH.

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TWO LETTERS FROM RICHARD WAGNER.

During the Festival at Bayreuth in 1876, a number of new Grand Pianos of the most celebrated European as well as of several American makers had been placed at Richard Wagner's disposal; among them being a new Centennial Concert Grand Piano made by "Steinway & Sons," of New York, which, from its wonderful power, beauty, and sympathetic quality of tone, far outshone all rival instruments, and which Richard Wagner at once chose for his own private use.

In the beginning of 1879 Wagner was requested by Mr. Theo. Steinway to send this Grand Piano to the Steinway Central European Depôt, in order to receive the latest invention, the "Tone Pulsator," patented in July, 1878. On sending the Grand, Richard Wagner wrote as follows :—

Bayreuth, March 11th, 1879.

MY DEAR MR. STEINWAY,—

I miss my Steinway Grand as one misses a beloved wife; it is wanting constantly, wanting everywhere. I no longer indulge in music since that Grand is gone, and trust its absence will not be too long protracted.

Yours very truly,

RICHARD WAGNER.

The following letter was written to Mr. Theodore Steinway by the great master, shortly after the return of the Steinway Grand (now containing the Tone Pulsator) to his home :—

Bayreuth, April 11th, 1879.

MY DEAR MR. STEINWAY,—

Really you ought personally to have witnessed the gratification which I experienced upon receiving back your magnificent Grand Piano; you certainly would not have asked me to add another word.

I do indeed deem it humiliating for so many other branches of art that this art of building pianofortes alone should so closely approach such undeniable ideal perfection. I know of nothing in painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, and, unfortunately, also music, which—since I have comprehension of the same—could compare with the masterly perfection reached in pianoforte building.

From your communication, however, I readily perceive with what enthusiastic love you seek to attain the incorporation of the most "spirituelle" tone into the Piano which heretofore had only served as the exponent of actual musical sound. Our great tone masters, when writing the grandest of their creations for the pianoforte, seem to have had a presentiment of the Ideal Grand Piano, as now attained by yourselves. A BEETHOVEN SONATA, A BACH CHROMATIC FANTASIA, CAN ONLY BE FULLY APPRECIATED WHEN RENDERED UPON ONE OF YOUR PIANOFORTES.

Although I do not possess the slightest dexterity in pianoforte playing, I delight in being able to do justice to your assumption of my inborn and cultivated sense of tone; for sounds of such beauty as those coming from my Steinway Grand flatter and coax the most agreeable tone-pictures from my harmonic melodic senses.

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